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VOLUNTEERS in OPA

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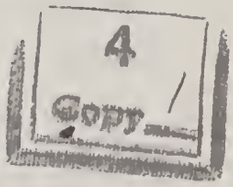

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by

Imogene H. Putnam

Historical reports on war administration.

Under the general supervision of
Harvey C. Mansfield, Chief,
Policy Analysis Branch

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Office of Temporary Controls
Office of Price Administration

1947

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HISTORICAL REPORTS ON WAR ADMINISTRATION: OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

OFFICE OF TEMPORARY CONTROLS
OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

General Publication No. 14

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

May 25, 1947

My dear Mr. Clark:

I transmit herewith a volume entitled *Volunteers in OPA*, by Imogene H. Putnam. It is General Publication No. 14 in the OPA series of Historical Reports on War Administration, and has been approved for publication.

Respectfully submitted.

HARVEY C. MANSFIELD,
Chief, Policy Analysis Branch

Earl W. Clark,
Director, Division of Liquidation,
Office of Temporary Controls

FOREWORD

This is one of the narrative and analytical volumes in the OPA series of Historical Reports on War Administration. As such, it is a part of the agency's share in the comprehensive program of studies of the experience of the civilian administrative agencies brought into being by the war, which was initiated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1942 and confirmed in July 1945 by President Harry S. Truman. The general scope and purpose of this program is set forth in the preface to *The United States at War*, recently published by the Bureau of the Budget.

The present volume deals with one of the largest and longest sustained examples in our history of the recruitment and use of volunteers in aid of their Government during an emergency. They were drawn from all walks of life, they performed all manner of tasks. Many came and went; some tens of thousands came and stayed. They brought special problems, but they gave to OPA's local activities the distinctive strength and tone of civic participation, of amateur nonbureaucratic administration of regulations having the force of law. They were indispensable, in their physical numbers and in the spirit they imparted, for the success and the acceptance of the agency's programs as they touched consumers. This account not only reviews the extent of volunteer accomplishments but also analyzes the administrative problems and points the practical lessons learned in the course of the experience. It should therefore interest both those who had some share in the work and those who are concerned to understand the techniques of harnessing the energies of a free citizenry for the common benefit.

This study is chiefly concerned with the volunteer contribution to the conduct of rationing and price control in the local communities. Other OPA volunteers, the advisory groups at the national, regional, and district offices, are mentioned only in their relation to operations at the local boards. Some of them partook otherwise of the nature of organized interest groups, with a different type of motivation and usefulness. The study is further limited to a discussion of volunteers in the continental United States. The volunteer work done in Region IX, our territories and island possessions, followed a somewhat differ-

ent pattern, which has been described in detail elsewhere.[1] Volunteers played only a minor role in rent control.

The plan of procedure in the preparation and publication of this volume follows the same lines approved at the time the first of our substantive publications, *The Beginnings of OPA*, was undertaken. The author's name on the title page indicates that she has been given both freedom and responsibility for the development of her material. She writes on a subject she knows authoritatively from several years' experience in the OPA district office for the District of Columbia, and accordingly brings to her task an intimate operating familiarity with the problems discussed, as well as a broad perspective on their significance. She has had full access to file materials in the agency so far as physical limitations permitted their use, and has had the benefit of consultation and advice from many official and unofficial sources; but the statements of fact and of interpretation are hers.

Acknowledgments are due to Mrs. Marion Andrews and Mrs. Dorothea Franck for editorial help; to Miss Molly Flynn, former liaison officer with the Office of Civilian Defense, for a critical reading; to Mrs. Elizabeth Rohr, of the Staff of the Consumer Advisory Committee in the national office, Mrs. Marion Weir of St. Louis, a member of that committee, Miss Constance Roach, of the Training Branch, and to James E. Mendenhall and Ruth Evarts O'Brien of the Information Department, for source material. Mrs. Anne Flory, formerly on the staff of the New York Regional Office, and later in charge of price panel coordination in the national office, was continuously helpful in furnishing pertinent material and in making constructive suggestions. Frank Bane, of the Council of State Governments has read the manuscript and encouraged its publication. The original draft was submitted to a number of other former officials familiar with the subject matter and their comments have been taken into account in the revision.

The public interest precludes any attempt on the part of the agency to impose here an official view in the evaluation of its many past activities. The manuscript has therefore been reviewed by the Policy Analysis Committee only to make sure that statutory requirements relating to the disclosure of confidential information have been observed, and to safeguard appropriate standards of scholarships and objectivity.

HARVEY C. MANSFIELD,
Chief, Policy Analysis Branch,
Office of Price Administration,
Office of Temporary Controls.

MAY 25, 1947.

[1] Mary Gresham, History of Region IX, *OPA Bibliography, 1940–47;* item No. 10K.91.

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INTRODUCTION

It is not unprecedented for Americans to lend aid to their Government. From the days of the New England town meeting this has been a part of our democratic heritage. Alexis de Tocqueville, traveling in this country when Andrew Jackson was President, noted with some amazement the number of civic societies and the tendency of people of all classes to come together in groups, "to improve . . . the public safety, commerce, industry, morality. . . ."[1] Any program intimately affecting the lives of American people can and must reckon with this democratic desire for participation.

Rationing and price control were such programs. They touched the lives of 130,000,000 Americans closely and personally. They were new, they were restrictive, and they were distasteful to the independence of the American spirit. They could scarcely have been administered in a democratic country without acceptance by the majority of the people. They were urgent wartime measures; it was imperative that they be accepted and that their administration reach into every corner of the country. OPA turned to the psychology of the town meeting to gain local acceptance and to the American habit of community participation to solve the problems of local administration. In an action unparalleled even in other democratic countries, OPA called upon citizens in the local communities to administer the rationing and price-control laws and these volunteers constituted over 75 percent of OPA's staff.

There were approximately 5,500 price and rationing boards throughout the country. Each was presided over by a volunteer board chairman, nominated from the community and appointed by the OPA District Director. Each chairman was assisted in his work by similarly appointed board members, "fairminded citizens of known integrity," who specialized in one or other of the regulations to be administered. In large boards the members were formed into panels, such as the gasoline rationing panel, and the grocery price panel. These board members were sworn employees of the Federal Government serving without pay. They were given adjudicative and enforcement powers. They issued the rations of gasoline and they mediated the settlement of overcharges. At the height of the program more than 100,000 board members, most of them busy people with other jobs as well, met night after night to administer these wartime measures for the benefit of their neighbors.

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[1] *Democracy in America,* Alexis de Tocqueville.

Another group of board members, known as the community service members undertook the task of informing and educating their communities on OPA problems. These public relations or information volunteers worked through local organizations, the press and the radio, and their members were usually drawn from those sources.

The record-keeping functions of the local boards were carried on by paid clerks, but because OPA's budget was slim for its needs and because citizens were willing to help in these humdrum tasks, thousands of clerical or "regular" volunteers helped the paid clerks.

Acting on the principle that probably 95 percent of all price violations were caused by ignorance or indifference, OPA drew another group of volunteers, the price panel assistants, generally from the women's organizations, to make educational and compliance surveys of the retailers in their communities.

When the War Ration Books were issued (one for each man, woman, and child in the country), or the big registrations were held, additional volunteers were enlisted for that service only. The school teachers and members of the parent-teachers associations formed the backbone of this group and came to be known as the "peak load" volunteers.

By OPA directive each local board was a cross section of the community representing all groups, without regard to color, race, religion, or political party. Business and labor, professional men, housewives, and farmers were all included in the local volunteer government of rationing and price control.

Not only did OPA give unprecedented control to the people in administering its laws, it invited representatives of the people to advise it on the policy and content of the regulations. From the day of the early price schedules under OPACS, representative members of the trade concerned were consulted when regulations or major amendments were to be issued. In 1945 there were 625 such volunteer Industry Advisory Committees, with a total of 7,500 members. The national OPA also had a Labor Policy Committee to advise on regulations as they affected wages and the cost of living. The Labor Policy Committee was composed of 6 volunteers from each of the 3 major labor organizations, the American Federation of Labor, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, and the Railway Brotherhoods. Between them they represented and expressed the support of ten to fifteen million union members. OPA's third type of national advisory committee represented consumers through 30 volunteer members, leaders in the field of consumer economics. Twenty of these members were also housewives who coped with the day-by-day problems of wartime shopping. This committee met 5 times a year in Washington and attempted to present to the operating divisions of OPA the point of view of the unorganized consumers of the country.

Each of these advisory committees had its counterpart in OPA's regional and district offices. Administrators at these levels consulted with the advisory committees on the operating problems of the program. The thousands of volunteers participating in this way expressed the viewpoint of the hundreds of thousands whom they represented, and carried back to those hundreds of thousands an explanation of the problems of price control.

The fundamental achievement of the volunteer program was to provide, at the grassroots, nonbureaucratic administration of bureaucratic controls. However, this achievement was not consciously planned in the beginning. It was rather a development born of necessity, introduced and fostered by believers in local participation as a democratic principle. In 1942 rationing volunteers filled an urgent need following Pearl Harbor. The sponsors of their use emphasized that this would also be an advantage in diffusing credit and blame for success and failures, instead of concentrating all political dissatisfactions on the national office in Washington. Volunteer local administration was eventually accepted by the agency as the surest means of gaining community acceptance for rationing and price-control restrictions, and because it helped to spread OPA's funds. But in the minds of some, though not all, in the agency, there was a justification for it beyond necessity or economy or the desire to please: this was the belief that it was better administration, more democratcially handled, and conducted with a broader view of the national interest, than any wholly paid staff could have provided.

The local boards were going concerns for over a year, before the need for price volunteers was officially recognized in 1943. The national office then urged their appointment and for the next year and a half developed the price panel system as a method of "neighborly persuasion." In late 1944, the price panels were delegated power to negotiate settlements of the Administrator's Claims for over-ceiling charges by retailers, and from then on moved closer to the enforcement work of OPA. After the end of the war in August 1945, when rationing was abolished, the imperative need for reaching into each neighborhood was reduced to the need for reaching each retail trade center. By this time the volunteer boards had long since proved their public relations value, and had shown that under proper conditions they were also effective instruments of price control. Reorganized and reduced in number, they were maintained until the end of the program in November 1946, as the operating units and points of public contact for retail price control.

In all of these ways, through local volunteer administration, and through specific-interest advisory committees, OPA met the challenge of administering a restrictive law in a democratic country.

Community participation was an integral part of the various defense programs from the days of the National Defense Advisory Commission. Both Selective Service and the Office of Civilian Defense, as well as OPA, provided examples of this general acceptance of local participation, but the forms which it took within OPA evolved from the special needs of the agency and were unique in this or any other country.

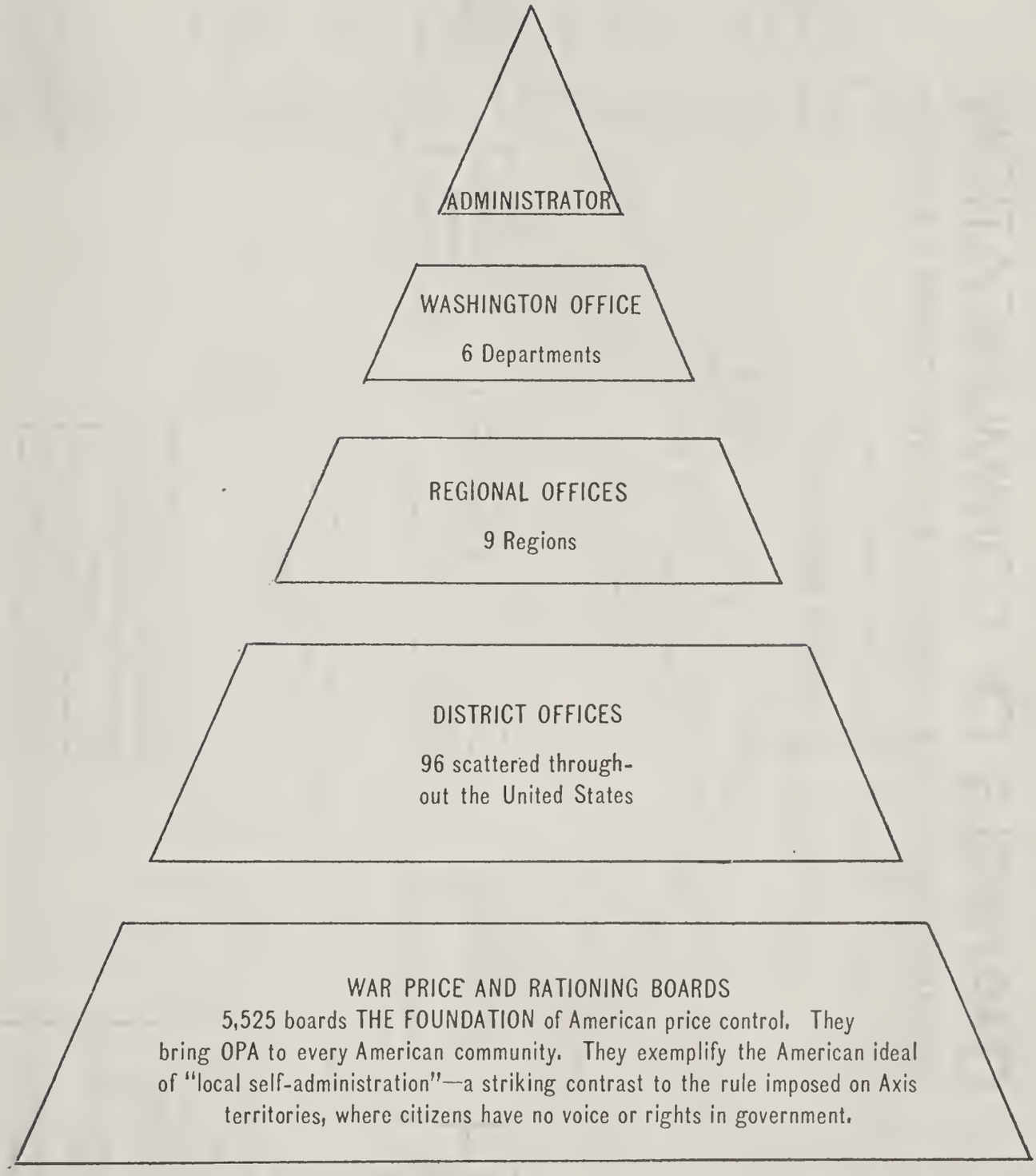
It is difficult to gauge the amount of agency support that was given to this departure from the accepted paths of Federal bureauracy. The Congress of the United States had provided for the use of volunteers within the OPA structure. Section 201 (a) of the Emergency Price Control Act reads:

> The Administrator may utilize the services of Federal, State, and local agencies and may utilize and establish such regional, local, and other agencies, and utilize and establish such voluntary and uncompensated services as may from time to time be needed.

The volunteers were thus duly authorized. Moreover, community participation became the expressed policy of each OPA Administrator in turn. But the development of community participation as a local instrument for the administration of Federal law was the responsibility of specific policy makers within the agency. Its contribution to price control would have been even greater had all the officials within OPA been agreed upon its desirability. This was never the case. The rationing volunteers were installed almost before OPA was aware of the fact and were accepted as a matter of necessity, but the use of price volunteers was a bone of contention during the first year of the program and was never fully espoused in some quarters of the agency. At no time were all the divisions of all the regional and district offices giving support to volunteer participation as outlined in the official directives. The decentralization of OPA which permitted this variation in operation also allowed individual staff members with initiative to develop volunteer programs beyond the scope of the national plan. Volunteer achievement was both limited and enriched by these circumstances.

The President of the United States, each of the four Administrators of OPA, and many individual executives at all levels gave their full support to this development in local self-government. The problems inherent in this experiment such as recruiting, training, and retention of personnel; the problems of securing impartial administration by the agency, and of gaining uniform adherence to the regulations and community acceptance of the decisions of volunteer lay adjudicators; these problems, all closely allied, were met by OPA with varying degrees of success at various times and places. They give point to this account of volunteer local administration of a Federal law.

OPA PYRAMID



SOURCE: Atlanta Regional Office

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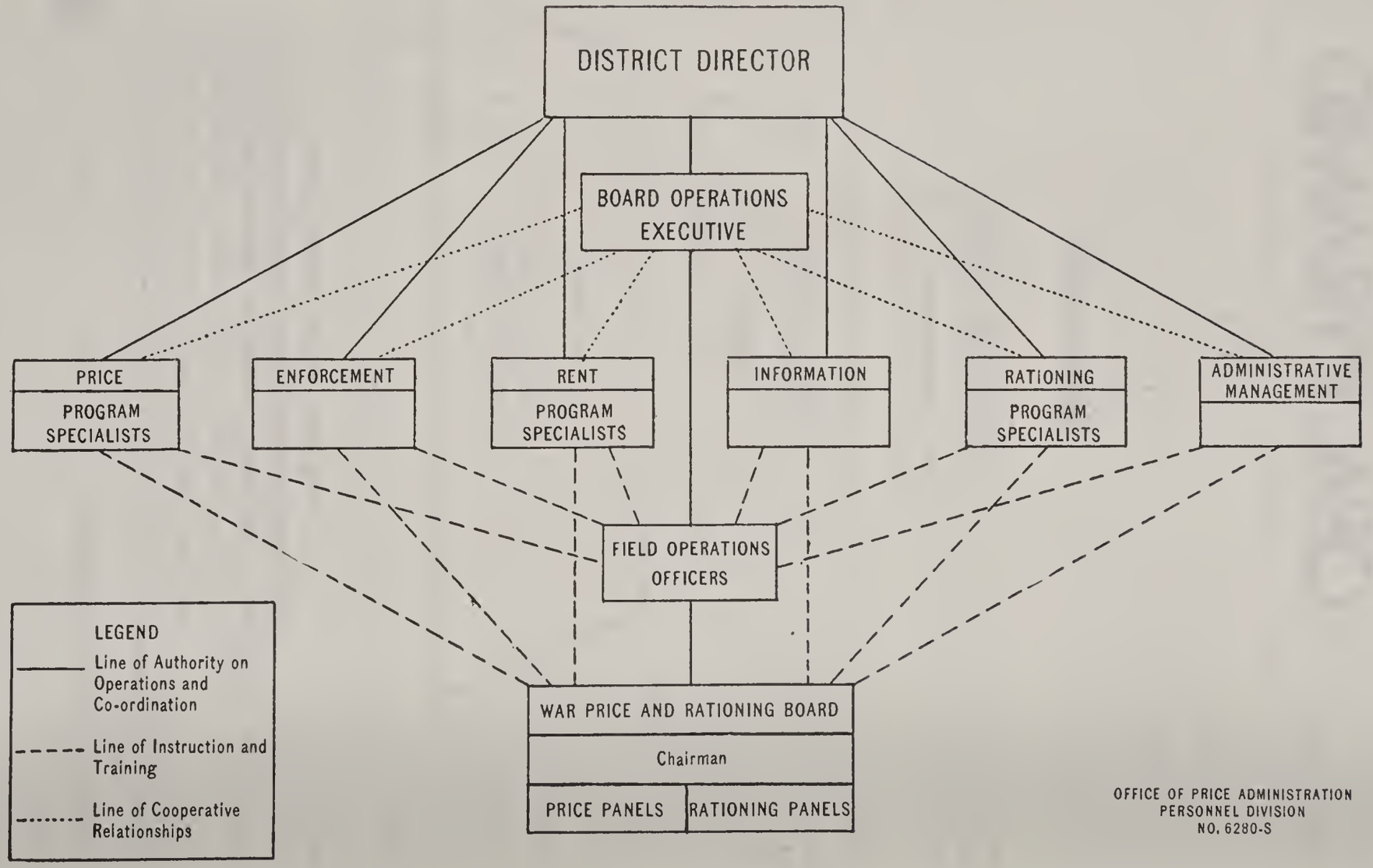
CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

BETWEEN THE LOCAL BOARD AND THE DISTRICT OFFICE



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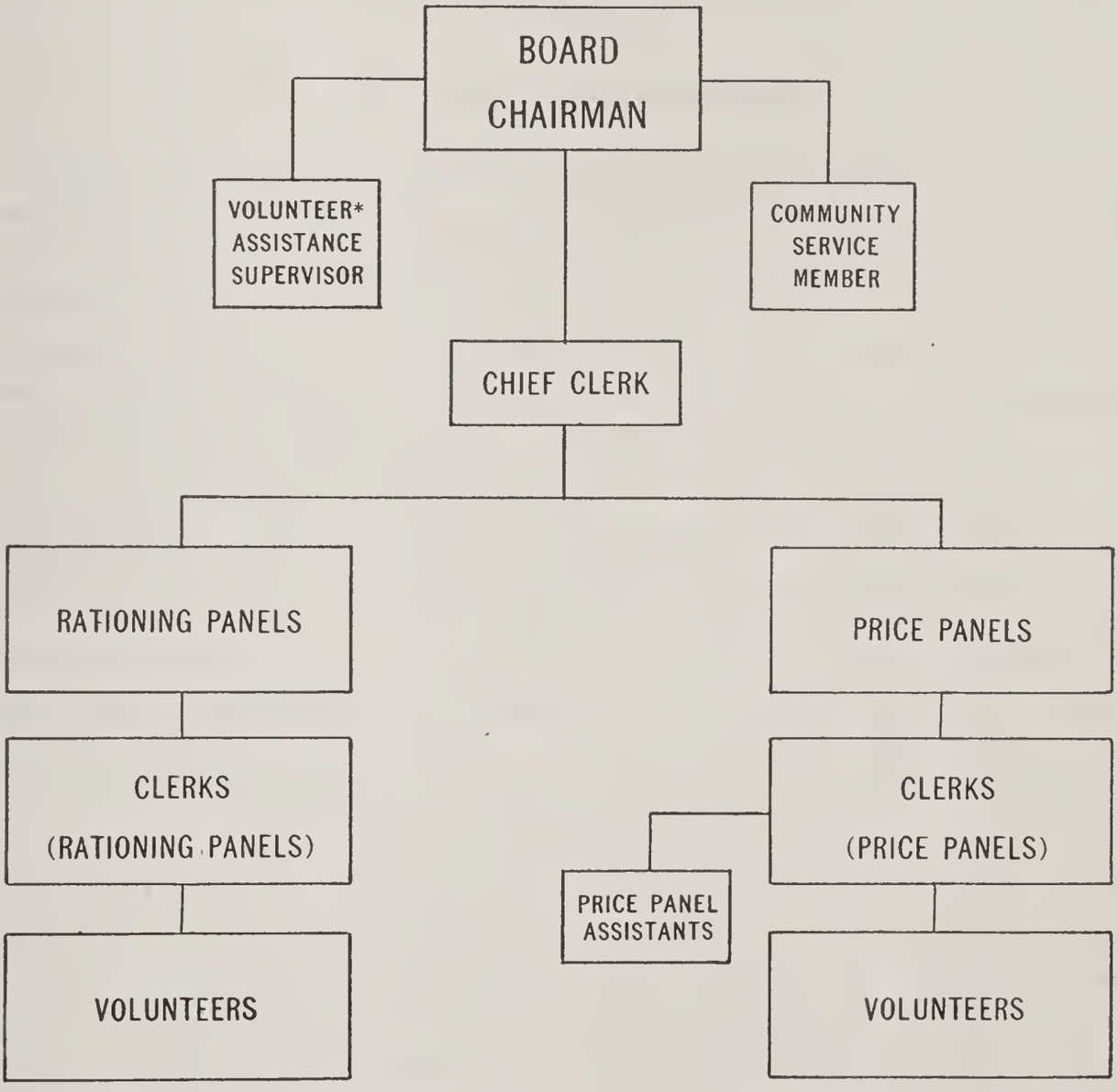
SUGGESTED ORGANIZATION OF A MEDIUM-SIZED PRICE AND RATIONING BOARD



*Recruits, Trains, Assigns, and Supervises Volunteers.

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CHAPTER 1

The Groundwork

"To Allay the Restlessness"

The groundwork for volunteer participation in OPA was laid long before the office itself was created. In May 1940, on the eve of Dunkirk, President Roosevelt appointed a National Defense Advisory Commission of seven commissioners to mobilize the resources of this country for defense. We are primarily concerned here with two members, the Commissioner for Price Stabilization, Leon Henderson, and the Commissioner for Consumer Protection, Harriet Elliott, and with the Commission's presently established Division of State and Local Cooperation. At this time Mr. Henderson's task was to control the prices of raw materials at the wholesale-producer-manufacturer level. Miss Elliott was concerned with problems at the retail and ultimate-consumer level. The powers of both were advisory only, but Henderson's price schedules were backed up by the Government's wartime right to requisition or allocate private property. Miss Elliott's advice was backed neither by wartime powers nor by specific Presidential directive. Her sphere was both vague and controversial; in Government councils she presented the case for civilian needs when defense measures were being planned, and around the country she attempted to prepare civilians for their part in total defense. It was her conception of total defense which laid the psychological groundwork for future consumer participation in rationing and price control. In her own words:

> Total defense is democracy's answer to total war. It protects our democratic way of life . . . Total defense gives every man and woman in the Nation the opportunity to participate in the defense of those tangible and intangible benefits of a democracy which are our heritage.[1]

In July 1940, only a few weeks after her appointment, Miss Elliott invited the representatives of 100 civic organizations to Washington

[1] Harriet Elliott, speech before Herald-Tribune forum, October 22, 1940.

to consider methods of consumer participation in the defense preparations of the country. In 1940 Americans were not at war and many of them could scarcely believe that the United States would become involved, but the news from Europe grew more disturbing each day, and the Government knew that allocations of material for defense would soon touch the public. As part of her responsibility for consumer protection Miss Elliott called this conference "to allay the restlessness of a people eager to help in the emergency." [2] The representatives carried back to their organizations, and through them to thousands of communities over the country, Miss Elliott's philosophy that total defense meant democratic participation in the defense effort.

A month later, in August 1940, the Division of State and Local Cooperation was added to the Advisory Commission, with Frank Bane, of the Council of State Governments, at its head. He had had a major share in organizing the field network of the social security system. In England and on the Continent civilians were already taking part in the actual defense of the country as fire fighters, air-raid wardens, first-aid nurses, victory gardeners, and salvage committees. Foreseeing the possibility of such needs here, Bane began the development of State and local defense councils through and under the State Governors. In May 1941 his division was expanded and reconstituted as the Office of Civilian Defense [3] under the leadership of Mayor LaGuardia, who shifted the organization's emphasis toward direct contacts with municipal authorities. Bane, retaining his nexus with the State capitals, joined OPA in October 1941 as head of a Division of Field Operations, to build a field organization.

Miss Elliott's Consumer Protection Division in 1940 urged the appointment of consumer representatives on the defense councils, and the formation of consumer information centers and local price-watching committees. The division issued a bulletin which carried consumer suggestions to civic organizations and to colleges. The mushrooming of defense plants created housing shortages, and the bulletin outlined a plan for the "Maintenance of Fair Rents During the Emergency." A later issue proposed a model rent law which, although it was not enacted in any State, greatly influenced the final national rent legislation.

Consumer Education Under OPACS

By April 1941, advisory price control was no longer adequate to stem the rising tide of prices. The Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply was established by Executive Order 8734 on April 11.

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[2] Memorandum, Cunningham to Elliott, July 16, 1940, Consumer Division files.
[3] Executive Order No. 8757, May 20, 1941.

Leon Henderson was appointed Administrator, with Harriet Elliott as associate, at the head of the Consumer Division. Mr. Henderson's previous advisory functions were now strengthened and more sharply defined. Miss Elliott's sphere on the other hand seemed to grow more nebulous. Her role as consumer protector at the seat of Government almost disappeared, and her field work narrowed to the education of consumers in wartime living.[4]

Building upon the experience of the last war, the Consumer Division set up the first local participating committees of World War II, the Fair Rent Committees. These volunteers were appointed by the mayors and "represented a cross section of the dominant interests of the community, frequently including representatives of real-estate groups, labor organizations, civic organizations, and, where military cantonments were in the vicinity, an army officer." [5] After the passage of the Emergency Price Control Act these committees were disbanded, but the method by which they decided "fair rents" was accepted: a normal rent date, prior to the impact of defense activities, was thereafter set for each "defense rental area" as a freeze date for determining rent ceilings.[6]

By the summer of 1941 the Consumer Division field staff was organized "to reach the following segments of the population: (1) colleges and secondary schools; (2) women's civic groups; (3) the labor groups; (4) Negro groups; and (5) second generation foreign groups." [7] Through speeches and printed material to these groups the field staff reached into every State and made people aware of the new phraseology: "conservation of scarce materials," "shortages" and "substitutes," "standards" and "grade labelling." In some communities the consumer representative on the local defense council had set up consumer interest committees or consumer information centers. The Consumer Division field staff encouraged the forming of more com-

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[4] For a fuller discussion of these developments see *The Beginnings of OPA,* OPA Series of Historical Reports on War Administration, pp. 23–29 (Washington, 1947).

[5] *First Quarterly Report,* Consumer Division files.

[6] After the passage of the Price Control Act, January 1942, the Fair Rent Committees were dissolved and the volunteer contribution to rent control assumed a minor role. Frequently, but not universally, vonlunteers were used in registration work where a new area came under rent control. Occasionally clerical volunteers were used for peak-load service. In 1943 and 1944 some few areas also used volunteers to make spot checks of compliance. In Norfolk, Va., the Boy Scouts were used for this purpose; they went from door to door asking three or four simple questions and recording the answers. This type of compliance check seems to have been dropped not through lack or inadequacy of volunteers but because the rent offices themselves were too short-handed to process the returns. Volunteers were not used extensively in rent control but the field offices were very much indebted to the volunteer Consumer Interest Committees of OCD for their continued educational work on the rent-control law.

[7] Memorandum for the Files, Dexter Keezer, Summary of Activities of the Consumer Division, April 1941–March 1942.

mittees and the expansion of existing ones. They wrote a *Handbook for Consumer Committees* and sent out fact sheets and outlines for speeches and training programs for consumer centers. In August 1941, the Consumer Division held a conference with 21 representatives of the Pennsylvania State and local defense councils to organize a program for the 450 consumer interest committees already set up in the State.

As the far eastern crisis developed during the fall months, the consumer centers found a ready audience even though money was plentiful and acute shortages of consumer goods were still ahead. Prices were rising at an alarming pace. Whether or not the United States was to become involved in the military war, there was real danger of losing the battle against inflation. Housewives saw their household money shrinking in value and they turned eagerly to their organizations or to the consumer centers for information and advice. Methods of reaching the community varied, but all "centers" became focal points for consumers eager to prepare themselves for whatever was to come. In Chicago, St. Louis, and Detroit the consumer committees set up information centers. In Washington, D. C. the center offered training classes for leaders in community work, and for housewives on the proper care of home appliances. Some centers set up exhibits of wartime substitutes and made radio broadcasts on wise buying. They made individual price studies and published the findings of "price-watching" committees. They received and recorded complaints. By 1942, 76 such consumer centers and hundreds of consumer committees scattered throughout the country were alerting their communities in the war against inflation.[8]

A Question of Tactics

On August 28, 1941, by Executive Order No. 8875, OPACS became OPA, with Leon Henderson sole Administrator. Frank Bane, as Director of Field Operations, began to plan for field needs. Civilian supply was transferred to the Office of Production Management, and Miss Elliott was left in OPA, as she said, "with no designated place in which to hang up the consumer hat." [9]

From the first days of the NDAC some members had openly expressed the opinion that consumer interests, with their emphasis on economic and social betterment, had no place in a defense program. Antagonism to the consumer program and its "social worker" sponsorship grew stronger as the war tensions increased. This was evident

[8] Data obtained from the consumer information file of the Consumer Relations Section, and general files.

[9] Letter, Harriet Elliott to John S. Kier, Deputy Administrator, OPA, September 22, 1941.

during the operation of OPACS, and at the very outset of OPA, Miss Elliott relates that John E. Hamm, Senior Deputy Administrator, told her he did not want "the consumer name involved with the OPA . . . that businessmen did not want to deal with a price office which had a consumer division." [10]

A partial explanation of this seeming repudiation of the principle of consumer participation lies in the fact that the newly established OPA was operating under what Henderson called "jawbone" persuasion. The price control act had not yet been passed by Congress and was being hotly debated in the fall of 1941. Business interests, lobbying against any price control, were quick to see and seize upon the threat of organized consumers. To some within OPA it seemed that the Consumer Division and all its works were a political liability. Eventually the act was passed and happily contained a clause permitting the Administrator "to utilize and establish such voluntary and uncompensated services . . . as may be needed." Eventually both businessmen and consumers were included in the OPA volunteer structure but now in the fall of 1941, consumer participation was clearly not a part of the official program.

Miss Elliott resigned in November. The Consumer Division was retained for another year but its emphasis was changed and it functioned under a political cloud. The Consumer Centers continued to operate for a year or more under the aegis of the local defense councils and the OCD. They were seldom brought directly into the OPA structure but they influenced it greatly. With their emphasis on prices, grades, and substitutes, they were, for the next year at least, the chief source of local information on price control. Later their members formed the backbone of two important groups of OPA volunteers, the community service members and the price panel assistants. Miss Elliott's belief in local participation radiated out through the Consumer Division, the Consumer Centers, and the consumer interest committees to the educational centers, the women's organizations, the minority groups, and to the small communities. It was not lost. It was a philosophy native to the American climate and when the need for volunteers arose, people everywhere remembered that total defense meant participation.

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[10] *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 2

The Rationing Boards

Only a few weeks after Miss Elliott's resignation a national emergency forced an alteration in the agency attitude and brought volunteers into OPA in a big way, and in operating capacities.

On December 7 the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor shut off our main source of rubber. To provide for war needs and at the same time prevent the complete breakdown of civilian transportation, rationing of automobile tires was necessary. Tire rationing meant restrictions on every community in the country; to be successful the need for it had to be understood and its administration supported by the local communities.

The Office of Production Management halted the sale of tires and on December 11 authorized OPA to undertake the inevitable rationing; by then only two regional offices had actually been opened. But Frank Bane, director of OPA's field operations, knew his way to the grass-roots, and won out in a bitter internal contest over plans for a rationing field organization. The defense councils which he had established as Director of State and Local Cooperation for NDAC and which had continued under the aegis of OCD, now covered every town and county in the United States. Tire rationing needed to be set up speedily and administered locally, at the least possible expense. With a genius compounded of the immediacy of the situation, an instinctive faith in the people, and a reflex grasp toward familiar instruments, Bane gave the job to the local defense councils throughout the country. On December 14, without consulting OCD, he telephoned the Governor's office in each state saying that tire rationing would be necessary and asking the State government's cooperation in setting up a State administrator and local boards to start the task in three weeks' time.

Each call was followed by a letter outlining a plan to organize tire rationing boards in "each political subdivision and county," to man these boards with volunteers "selected among citizens highly qualified

to meet the emergency," and to utilize the local councils of defense "because they already have established offices and qualified personnel." He was explicit as to the line of authority and the duties:

> Such is the organization: the Federal department developing policies . . . and placing this material in the hands of the State defense council; the State defense council taking the responsibility for seeing its State is . . . organized through the local councils of defense; and the various local councils of defense assuming the responsibility for seeing that there are sufficient boards located in a sufficient number of places and adequately staffed to serve their communities.
>
> And so we should have a local organization operating under instructions and regulations furnished by Washington . . . clothed with necessary authority to:
>
> 1. Determine who shall receive a tire in accordance with instructions, regulations, and standards furnished from Washington.
> 2. Issue a certificate upon form to be furnished to each applicant that the local board thinks is eligible for a tire.
> 3. Keep records of all applicants, all rejections, and all certificates issued.
> 4. Make periodic reports to the State defense councils on forms or schedules to be furnished.[1]

"Citizens Serving Without Pay"

In the next few weeks several thousand people received urgent telephone calls from their governors and mayors; in the towns and counties people signed up for the emergency, little guessing what lay ahead.

On December 27 OPA sent printed application forms and detailed instructions by air mail to local communities. "In effect these instructions charted the course of the whole program. In clear and simple language they stated the nature of the rubber emergency, proposed a rationing system to care for the most essential needs of each community *and showed the poeple how by their own efforts* they could set up . . . tire rationing boards to do the job."[2] Nine days later, on January 5, 1942, tire rationing went into effect. The volunteers were ready.

In January some 7,000 tire-rationing boards, covering every locality, opened their doors to serve the public. They were manned entirely by "local citizens serving without pay."[3] This organizational feat was accomplished by a democratic government, using democratic methods, at a speed which even a totalitarian government might have envied.

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[1] Letter of Frank Bane to the several State Governors December 19, 1941; copy attached to Tire Rationing Instruction Letter No. 2, January 6, 1942.

[2] *Quarterly Report,* Division of Field Operations, OPA, April 1942.

[3] *Tire Rationing: How, What and Why,* Consumer Division, January 5, 1942.

Rationing Board Members

The first tires were scarcely allocated before it became obvious that other scarcities were developing, and that if each consumer was to be assured his claim to a fair share, other rationing must follow. On January 27 OPA was designated the rationing agency for all goods and commodities that might be placed on the list for controlled distribution at the retail level. Rationing of typewriters, automobiles, and sugar followed in the next few months.

The rationing boards were at work. Members were nominated by the local councils of defense and appointed by the State governors. They varied from three to seven board members in a community, "citizens highly qualified to meet the emergency," plus whatever clerical help they could borrow from the county, town, or State, or could dig down into their own pockets to hire, or could commandeer, without compensation, from friends. One member was designated by the State Governor as "Board Chairman," and upon him rested the responsibility for leadership in the undertaking.

Few people at the beginning realized the extent of the problems before them, the number of personnel, or amount of equipment or space that would be needed. So the boards were set up in any free space that was offered: in empty school rooms, post-office lobbies, at courthouse centers, in country grocery stores, and in the homes of board members. There was no money for equipment; sometimes the State or county provided cast-off furniture; more often the board members supplied what they could themselves. Lacking filing cases, they used orange crates; lacking drawer space, they used shoe boxes; lacking desks, they used boards across trestles.

The board members were sworn representatives of the Government and as such they had to explain the regulations to tradesmen and consumers. They had to pass on all the applications. Each new rationing program added to their already heavy load. They had signed up for tire rationing but they struggled through regulations on recapping and retreading, then on automobiles and typewriters and sugar. Many board chairmen gave full time and more to the job. All board members put in long hard hours night after night; a few gave up in despair. When one board member who was also a newspaper editor announced his resignation with the statement that he had received 17 pounds of printed material from OPA, another board member retorted that a soldier's pack weighed more than 17 pounds, and that he and the rest of the board intended to carry on.[4]

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[4] "Board Management in Region VII," James J. Delaney, Regional Board Executive, *OPA Bibliography, 1940–47,* item No. 10K.61.

Peak-Load Volunteers

The second major rationing job was the sugar program, scheduled for February, then April, and finally put into effect in May. Each new item to be rationed cast its shadow before it in a stream of inquiries to the rationing boards. Sugar rationing nearly swamped the boards before it went into effect. Sugar reached even further into the communities than had tire rationing. It entailed the registration of every member of every family in the country, as well as every food store and institutional user. In terms of space alone this was beyond the capacity of the early one-room or one-counter rationing offices. In Washington, Bane again went straight to the communities for help; by arrangement with the Office of Education and the school authorities in each State he borrowed the public school system of America. The second large group of volunteers for OPA consisted of the teachers and mothers who handled this registration at the local schools. It has been estimated that over 100,000 persons volunteered their services for War Ration Book I. For each succeeding peak-load job during the next 4 years the school teachers worked overtime to contribute to OPA as "peak-load" volunteers.

Regular Volunteers

With the help of the schools and the school teachers, sugar registration was accomplished, but the registration cards were sent back to the boards to be filed, and, almost before they were received, applications for home canning sugar poured in by the hundreds and thousands. At this period most board chairmen moved their boards to larger quarters (again borrowed or hired on faith in future funds), and sent out calls for additional volunteers. From this time on, the clerical or "regular" volunteers became an important and essential part of the board system. They served as receptionists, file clerks, telephone clerks, counter clerks, and some became expert enough to handle any part of the clerical work.

These regular volunteers not only helped to make OPA's funds go further and to interpret OPA policies to their communities, but by the very fact of their being volunteers, gained cooperation from a public not fond of bureaucrats. An early report of board work in New York City sums up all of these effects, and gives a hint of the administrative problems inherent in the use of volunteers:

> I called at 1450 Broadway and talked with Mrs. Jenney Propos, the volunteer head of the volunteers . . . the work there has been recognized by the Red Cross as a definite activity and she has an average of 60 volunteers per week doing 20 jobs. The public respects the workers, and they have innumerable cases of an irritated visitor being smoothed down by the mere fact that he recognizes the uniforms and asks if the work is voluntary. When they are told it is, they seem

to gather more trust in the Government and they frequently, as a mark of gratitude for the services rendered by the volunteer, offer donations to the workers for their Red Cross chapter. (These donations are not accepted.) The turnover depends largely upon the season, the relation of the workers to their supervisors, and the fact that Mrs. Propos varies the jobs very considerably and tries to fit a worker into the type of work which she most enjoys. They stick best at jobs where they contact the public, or the boards, and they usually increase the number of days or hours which they give, as their interest gathers. Mr. Mayer estimates that the monetary value of the services of workers exclusive of the boards themselves at from $175,000 to $200,000 annually in three New York boards.[5]

A Change of Name

During March and April 1942 OPA first supplied some funds for equipment, materials, and telephones, and for the salaries of the first paid clerks. In April organization officers were appointed by OPA to look after the physical needs of the boards. OPA was accepting its emergency volunteer boards as a permanent part of the organization. The position of the board chairman became increasingly important. In some areas he engaged the paid personnel; in all areas he had to approve them, and he had the power to have them removed. From this time on new board members, although still nominated by the local council of defense, were appointed by the State or district OPA director. The board chairman was usually consulted about additional members and his opposition, if it existed, was difficult to overcome.

On April 28 the General Maximum Price Regulation was issued, placing a ceiling, the highest price charged in March 1942, on "virtually everything Americans eat, wear, and use."[6] It required that the prices of all cost-of-living items be posted in the stores for customers to see, and that a copy of this list be filed with the local board by July 1, 1942. The local boards were to handle price as well as rationing. On May 25 the boards were officially designated as War Price and Rationing Boards. The board personnel, by now intent upon filing the sugar registrations and frantically trying to keep abreast of four rationing programs, may be forgiven if they scarcely noticed and failed to use the new name. Except for official correspondence the boards remained "Ration Boards" for more than another year.

The board chairmen undoubtedly read the letter announcing a change of name, and the instructions which followed a few days later. These instructions said that, until adequate staff could be provided, the boards would be asked only to distribute price materials,

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[5] Report, *Use of Volunteers in Region II,* Mary Mason, November 1942, in volunteer files.
[6] Advance release, PM 3072.

give out applications, receive filings, and forward any price complaints to "the appropriate OPA Office." No price staff, paid or volunteer, was recruited and no further official instructions were sent out. When the price lists began arriving in July, a few conscientious board members dated them and filed them away in boxes; in hundreds of boards harrassed and hurried clerks merely piled the lists in corners. When stacks of price regulations began arriving, they too were piled as much out of the way as possible. In general the district offices, and not the local boards, handled the trade inquiries and requests on price.

In the following months of 1942 the rationing program ballooned out to include gasoline, rubber footwear, and then coffee. The original number of board members was increased and the board chairmen were directed to divide them into commodity panels: the tire rationing panels, the food panels, the gasoline panels.

Gasoline rationing enormously increased the work load and did more to test the fairness of the board members than any other ration program. Local pressure was very strong for the granting of "a few more gallons," but local publicity threw a bright light upon panel activities and acted as a deterrent to favoritism. All regional histories bear witness to panel resistance to this pressure. Extra gasoline for funerals seems to have been the most difficult denial the panels had to make, and gasoline for holiday trips the most frequent. One of the most amusing denials was made by the Pueblo gasoline panel: "An erstwhile sergeant who had returned to Pueblo to remarry his former wife applied for gasoline to take his honeymoon and the board had to inform him that while they personally weren't against 'love' unfortunately the gasoline regulations made no provisions for it and he must be denied."[7] A newspaper in the same town, praising the work of the board added that any man desirous of entering an unpopularity contest should join the gasoline panel.

Auxiliary Volunteers

In order to conserve tires and gasoline, several auxiliary groups of volunteers were recruited to serve the public outside the designated OPA boards. In more than a thousand rural areas individual distribution officers were appointed with limited powers. In homes or offices or grocery stores these volunteers stored the applications, gave them out on request, and advised the applicants on eligibility. These officers had no adjudicative powers, and all applications were returned to the nearest local board for processing.

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[7] Record, War Price and Rationing Board No. 2, Pueblo, Colo., OPA, *OPA Bibliography, 1940–47*, item No. 10K.64.

In the highly industrialized areas, plant-site and plant-area boards were established specifically to service the employees of a given plant or area. At the height of gasoline rationing there were 65 such boards with a total of 397 panels. In addition to these groups, over 20,000 transportation committees within the industrial plants developed car-sharing plans and made preliminary examination of applications for tires and gasoline.

The Pattern is Set

The volunteer boards were now functioning on a full-scale basis sufficient to handle the rationing requirements of a great nation at war. The members were not yet fully aware of the enormous task ahead, but they knew they were in for a long pull. Their number had more than quadrupled. The volunteer board chairmen were responsible for supervision and leadership of 125,000 people and the administration of 18 different rationing programs.

As the volunteer State Tire Rationing Administrator for Illinois wrote in recalling these early days:

If you were one of these men who became State tire administrators, little did you dream that you were launching your part in a program in seven States which eventually would handle applications and dole out to your neighbors scarce rationed commodities to the following staggering figures before the end of World War II which was just beginning:

Product	*Quantity rationed*	*Number of applications*
Tires, tubes, recaps	28,000,000 units	21, 000, 000
Automobiles	86,000 cars	80, 000
Canning sugar	668,000,000 pounds	18, 955, 000
Bicycles	108,000 bikes	106, 000
Rubber boots	603,000 pairs	241, 000
Fuel oil	9,996,000,000 gallons	9, 100, 000
Gasoline	9,885,000,000 gallons	78, 700, 000
Stoves	527,500 stoves	525, 000
Shoes	4,990,000 pairs	3, 700, 000
Ration books	72,000,000 books	29, 000, 000
Institutional and industrial allotments		2, 034, 000
Miscellaneous trade applications (gas stations, grocery stores, etc.)		3, 200, 000
Miscellaneous consumer applications (furloughs, special diets, etc.)		19, 500, 000
Total applications approved for issuance		186, 141, 000

Yes, those were the figures representing the volume of business which passed through your hands in our region from January 1942 through October 1945. As a matter of fact, your board members deliberated over, adjudicated upon and approved over one-quarter million applications for rationed commodities per day after meats and processed foods were included in the list of rationed commodities. Over 5,000 separate forms came into being to do the rationing process and more

than 10,000,000 pounds of paper were required to accomplish the rationing task in this region.[8]

The volunteers were not yet aware of the full load they would be expected to carry, but in this first year they proved their willingness, their initiative, and their capability to carry the load, or they dropped out. No boards failed to open, or closed, for lack of personnel. Business men volunteered in St. Louis and farmers' wives in Nebraska, an Indian chief in New Mexico, and society women in New York. They surmounted difficulties of geography and weather; in northern Minnesota they used an airplane to get War Ration Book I to an isolated group of Indians, and in the mountains of New Mexico they attended the board meetings on snowshoes. The people had been told "how by their own efforts they could set up . . . the ration boards," and they did it. The program was theirs; they shouldered the responsibility, and once convinced of the necessity, they stayed for even the dullest jobs. They felt themselves a part of the country's defense effort. There is in the files a penny post card from a post office in North Dakota. On one side it is addressed to the President of the United States. On the other is scrawled: "The sugar books have come all right. Thanks."

This initial group of volunteers, board members, and clerical workers, representative citizens from the local community, serving the community, explaining to the community, undoubtedly evoked the cooperative attitude in which rationing was at first received. A public unused to the petty annoyances and actual deprivation of wartime controls went to the Ration Board and was served or refused by neighbors. Rationing as a people's program was accepted. The theory of the Division of Field Operations was justified:

> . . . in a democracy any attempt at social and economic control must command the convinced support of the great majority of citizens and . . . any policing of a recalcitrant minority should be done, not by a remote central authority, but . . . by the resident officials known and respected in their communities . . .[9]

During the next 3 years, until the end of the program, rationing continued to be handled by the local boards. Naturally enough there were both structural and administrative weaknesses in such a hastily devised plan. Some of these were remedied; for others no satisfactory solution was found. By and large, the original framework and pattern remained the same.

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[8] *History of Board Management Division, Region VI*, Thomas L. Kelly, assistant to the Regional Administrator, December 1946.

[9] W. Jerome Wilson, draft of Frank Bane's report on the Division of Field Operations for the First Quarterly Report, March 1942.

Volunteer Administration

The original three board members were appointed by the Governor of the State. They were usually attorneys or business men, sometimes they were political appointees. In none of these cases could they be said to have represented the community as a whole and as early as May 1942 OPA began to remedy this situation. Field Administrative Letter No. 3 which transferred the appointive power from the Governor to the OPA State or district director also broadened the base of representation. Members were still to be nominated by the local councils but the following qualifications were to be considered in making appointments:

1. They shall be fair-minded citizens who have the respect of their neighbors and are of known integrity.
2. They shall be able to devote the time necessary to fulfill the work requirements of board membership. A minimum of 8 to 10 hours a week will normally be required from each member.
3. They shall have a basic appreciation of the objectives of the rationing and price-control programs and a sincere interest in the attainment of those objectives.
4. They shall regard their duties as board members as a public trust rather than as an opportunity to promote a special viewpoint.
5. The total membership of each board shall be such as to represent the community as a whole, and to this end care shall be exercised to avoid the selection of all members of any one board from the same political party, sex, religious faith, economic level, social level, or occupation, except as under special circumstances such selection may be necessary and unavoidable.
6. Membership of the individual boards should include members from labor and, where appropriate, members from agriculture. In the selection of labor and farmer members the nominating body should consult the recognized state and local organizations of labor and farmers.

No person engaged or financially interested in the selling of commodities shall participate, as a board member, in board price or rationing activity involving that field in which he is interested. [10]

Where the original appointments were faulty it took time and determination on the part of the OPA district staff to change the situation. The expanding program, which demanded additional board members, provided an opportunity for adding members from other occupations or from minority groups, but some board chairmen opposed this vigorously. A glance at the chart showing occupational composition of the boards in July 1945 shows that eventually this defect was partially overcome and most boards became, as intended, fairly representative of the community as a whole.[11]

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[10] Field Administrative Letter No. 3, May 19, 1942.

[11] For a fuller discussion see Frances H. Williams, "Minority Groups and OPA," *Public Administration Review,* spring 1947, pp. 123–128.

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A. Composition and analysis of board membership

	Number of boards	Number of members
Clergymen	1,600	2,269
Consumers	4,131	24,139
Doctors	1,147	1,644
Educators (teachers, etc.)	3,335	7,556
Farmers	3,612	11,061
Labor (organized)	2,356	5,951
Labor (unorganized)	1,059	2,392
Lawyers	2,267	3,892
Merchants	4,577	23,648
Negro members	197	755
Others	4.590	43,768

As the programs enlarged and the first unity of patriotic purpose weakened, it became evident that even a broad representational base alone could not insure strict or uniform adherence to the regulations. Whether appointed by the Governor or the district director, board members were in truth representatives of the community and on certain issues they felt a closer tie to the community than to the edicts coming out from Washington. It was difficult for men in the oil-producing States to believe in the necessity for gasoline rationing and for those in the cattle States to believe in meat rationing. This same lack of conviction may have characterized the paid personnel also, and possibly was not entirely overcome in either group. It is a truism that men obey most strictly the laws in which they believe most strongly. The problem was ameliorated after OPA was able to provide sufficient supervision to assure convincing explanations when needed and to review performance as an additional safeguard.

More excusable but also more difficult to overcome was the board attitude toward hardship cases. These board members had been appointed because they were "highly qualified to meet the emergency." Generally speaking they were people of experience and standing in the community. Early lack of instructions encouraged them to use their initiative and they felt they had a right to use their discretion. To their credit it should be said that the most frequent use of "discreion" was in hardship cases. Regardless of the regulation, board members found it very difficult to deny the application of a neighbor whom they knew to be in what they considered genuine hardship. OPA finally recognized the realities of this situation and met it in most ration programs by allowing to each board or area a "hardship quota" to be allocated at the discretion of the board. Quotas proved to be the most effective device for keeping local board adjudications attuned to national program objectives.[12]

[12] For a detailed analysis of this whole problem see Emmette S. Redford, *Field Administration of War Time Rationing,* OPA Series of Historical Reports on War Administration.

A legal observer noting this tendency to make local interpretations claimed that this representation of the local point of view made for better law enforcement in the long run. He characterized the State administrators and local boards as "determined to carry out a national policy but to carry it out in the light of local circumstances which they knew" and summed up the situation from a legal point of view:

> Decentralization has its disadvantages as well as its virtues; but the discretion and elasticy which the system affords makes for a far more general acceptance of the law itself than would unvarying adherence carried out by administrators far removed from the actual scene of administration.[13]

The incidence of departure from strict adherence to the regulations was seldom great enough to affect the program as a whole and never great enough to justify rescinding the power delegated to board members. To the end of the program, adjudicative action was reserved to them, the representatives of the local community. If a tire had to be denied, they denied it; if an exception was made, they made it; if a mistake was made, they took the blame for it. They had to understand, or act as though they understood, the too long, too legalistic early regulations. There is ample evidence that they sometimes made their own interpretations, but very little evidence of favoritism, and still less of dishonesty. As the Atlanta record states:

> . . . they sometimes took liberties with rationing regulations, but there were times when common sense and good judgment required that these liberties be taken. They had an immediate task before them. People were clamoring for their share of available commodities and the problems couldn't wait. So those men rolled up their sleeves and went to work . . .[14]

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[13] Reuben Oppenheimer, "An Experiment in Decentralization," *Columbia Law Review,* March 1943.

[14] *History of the Office of Price Administration in Region IV,* "Chapter VI, War Price and Rationing Boards," John P. Dyer.

CHAPTER 3

Price Impassè

Participation at the National Level

With rationing so firmly ensconced in the eye, and the favor, of the grass roots, it is difficult to understand the semiparalysis which overtook the Price Department in April 1942 when it faced the related problem of getting its program accepted by the local communities.

In retrospect it should be remembered among other factors that the price authorities, up to the issuance of the General Maximum Price Regulation in April 1942, were dealing mainly with producers and processors, not ordinarily with retailers, and certainly not with consumers directly. Up to this time their immediate concern was to gain aceptance in the councils of government and from the business world. They trusted that, because consumers were the ultimate beneficiaries, they would also be the automatic supporters, of price control. They knew from arduous experience that they could not take support for granted elsewhere. They did not want to be identified with organizing consumers, lest this add to their difficulties with the trade. They cast consumers in a passive role, thinking retailers held the key.

The issuance of the GMPR radically changed the conditions of success for price control. In one of its most dramatic moves, OPA reached out and put a lid on prices the country over. Suddenly and inclusively there was a ceiling price on practically every item the Nation's consumers had to buy and, willy-nilly, those consumers would now decide the issue at the Nation's counters. Would they pay above the legal price to get scarce items; would they go into the black market to get choice ones? Would they support the honest merchant or the chiseler? The answer to these questions spelled success or failure for price control.

The Price Department saw the need for obtaining public acceptance of the General Maximum Price Regulation. Its staff laid extensive plans for public education. Theoretically, and for the future they

envisaged community participation but they did not see an active immediate role for it, nor did they sense the threat to the program from an indifferent public. They were beset by industry pressures and not yet fully appreciative of the contributing pressures of a public willing to trade in the black market. Price control was as new to the men formulating its policies as to the people these policies would affect. A politician, a social worker, a psychologist, or an advertising man would have sensed the imediate necessity of gaining the firm support of the buying public; even the most brilliant lawyer, economist, or industry specialist might not. And price policy was at this time chiefly determined, both in its economic strategy and in its public relations, by lawyers, economists, and industry specialists.[1]

General Max and the Housewives

The policy makers of OPA read and were unpersuaded by three pertinent documents still in the price files at this writing. The first of these was a favorable report on the "Effectiveness of the Canadian Price Control Law,"[2] under which housewives were used to check prices. A second report covered price checking in World War I, when 1,439 volunteer housewives reported weekly from some 1,084 cities. The author concluded:

> It was believed that a profound reaction in favor of the Food Administration would result from this idea. [Any objections] . . . might have been answered by Hoover's argument that a volunteer's program avoided setting up a permanent paid bureaucracy.

The third report at their disposal was a detailed plan for the use of local boards in price as well as rationing.[3] This report by John H. Sly of Princeton advised care "to avoid local witch hunts," but insisted that successful price control must be "considered as a program of local citizen participation in a Federal function." Reminding the Policy Committee of the prohibition experience, where lack of community support made law enforcement almost impossible, he advocated community education through community participation. Organizationally he advised one operating unit for rationing and price: "The Price Control and Rationing Board." He saw the personnel of the boards as consisting of:

(1) A board chairman (volunteer).

(2) Price panels and rationing panels of board members (volunteers) under the chairman.

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[1] See Consumer Division Quarterly Report, Sessions to Hamm, March–September 1942.

[2] Research Division, OPA, April 27, 1942.

[3] Memorandum, John F. Sly, consultant to OPA, Princeton University, to Robert E. Sessions, Consumer Division, OPA, "Administrative Control of Retail Prices and Rationing," February 27, 1942.

(3) Price wardens and rationing wardens (volunteers attached to the panels), educational emissaries of good will to the retailers and the community.

(4) Clerical aid necessary to both programs.

(5) A paid district supervisor, the Federal representative charged with training and supervision of the wardens.

Sly built up the functions of the price board members, seeing them as a channel for neighborly persuasion in the adjustment of complaints. He emphasized and dignified the work of volunteer checkers or "price wardens," believing them to be the most important instrument in community education. These wardens were to be volunteers:

> Similar to air-raid wardens . . . recruited among well-known citizens and selected for tact, integrity, and knowledge of the community . . . informed of the responsibility and dignity of their position, provided with an insignia of office, and intrusted with inspectional and educational duties.

Sly explained these duties, broadening the conception of price checkers in World War I to include the education of retailers, adjustment of minor complaints, and *maintenance of a high degree of community support.* He gave them insignia to identify them to retailers, and thereby preclude any charge of "snooping." He added supervision from the Federal office. Eventually most of his recommendations were adopted, but they did not find favor with the Policy Committee in April 1942.

Instead, the Policy Committee circulated its own plan: "Consumer Participation to Make the General Ceiling Work."[4] This plan anticipated "a powerful urge on the part of the consuming public to participate in making the plan work." The urge must be channelled, consumers must be made to realize that "novel and difficult burdens" had been placed on the retailer but that "no corresponding burden" had been placed on the consumers. Consumers must be lenient and patient. The necessary price checking would be done by "professional shoppers," and any "self-appointed price policemen should be identified as fifth wheels and trouble makers."

Accordingly, a press release of April 30, 2 days after the issuance of the GMPR, gave as its first point in a "Guide for Housewives": "Don't Try to be a Price-Policeman."[5] In a press conference the same day the official position was explained as "almost precisely opposite to that of Canada in respect to the use of or calling on, housewives . . . to occupy a role as personal policemen."[6]

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[4] "Confidential" Memorandum, mimeographed, April 29, 1942.

[5] PM 3133.

[6] Press conference, April 30, 1942, Information files.

Housewives were not to be used as volunteer price wardens, and housewives were not to do any self-appointed price-checking. Housewives, the women who do 80 percent of the Nation's retail buying, were publicly warned against "policing" the prices of the things they bought.

General Max and the Local Boards

During this period the Price Division not only warned against checking of retail stores by housewives, but also failed to urge the appointment of price members (similar to ration members) at the local boards. Thus "General Max," the first price-control regulation to reach the community, was presented to the public without either local board or community sponsorship.

It is frequently said that the local boards rejected the price program. Certainly by 1943 they were antagonistic, but in the spring of 1942 their response was only an understandable indifference. The volunteers were absorbed in programs on which they had specific instructions and in which the public demanded immediate service. It is not surprising that they had slight interest in a new, complicated regulation not definitely assigned to them. The three official documents sent to the boards to announce the new program were not calculated to arouse their enthusiasm about price control.

These "letters," sent within 3 days of each other, were the only national office communications on price, to the boards, for nearly a year. The first letter, on May 25, from Leon Henderson, announced the change of name and function. After a general introductory paragraph (which did not mention the price program), this letter said:

> The fine work which you have done in the past months now leads us to place upon you not only increased responsibilities in the rationing program but certain important responsibilities in administering the over-all price control program . . . [these were not explained] . . . At the same time the local boards are being officially designated as War Price and Rationing Boards.

An accompanying "organization" letter [7] covering five printed pages described the general qualifications of all board members, their appointment, and their functions. Price was mentioned once in the five pages: "A third panel may deal with the retail price control program."

The third letter sent was entitled "Preliminary Instructions." [8] It said that "ultimately" the boards would be expected to "assist in checking retail prices" and "in obtaining compliance." In the meantime, until adequate staff could be provided, the boards would be asked "to perform only the most urgent tasks:" (1) to distribute material, (2)

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[7] Local Board Administrative Letter, No. 1.

[8] Local Board Price Letter, General Instruction No. 1.

to receive price lists, (3) to supply applications to retailers, (4) to forward complaints to "the proper OPA office."

There were only three slight references to price duties as differentiated from rationing duties, and four specific tasks, all of them clerical. To the over-worked ration board volunteers, this could scarcely have seemed an inspiring program. The "ultimate" functions presumed price members at the local boards, but no dynamic appeal went out from the national office asking citizens to undertake the price functions as they had the rationing ones. No directive came from the Price Division on recruiting the additional volunteers. No person was specified to do the recruiting. A concrete, evocative program was not put into effect for another year, though several months were spent on elaborate plans, ultimately abandoned, for a gigantic registration of all retailers by boards. By October 1942, paid price clerks were appointed for a few boards, presumably to file the cost-of-living price lists stacked in the corners here and there. After the filing was done, or before it, the new clerk was gratefully absorbed into the rationing work and had no time to read the price schedules which were piling up on the shelf. The local boards did not so much reject General Max; they ignored it.

Not only the boards but the communities around the boards failed to become acquainted with the GMPR. Participation is a two-way affair and the housewives who might have volunteered for the new program went on their way, busy with rationing, or air-raid duties, or war-block service. They read in newspapers of the General Maximum Price Regulation, but their only direct contact was in the noncommittal presence of retailers. They read of, but seldom saw, the cost-of-living price lists; they were first puzzled, then uninterested, then oblivious. At this stage few of them saw any connection between the prices they paid in stores and the "Price" in big letters over the ration board. A few inveterate consumers, noting prices higher than those of March, sent complaints to the ration board. These were doubtless forwarded to the proper OPA Office. There is no record that they were ever answered. Even had the national office not deliberately discouraged participation in price, in most regions there was no avenue by which it could be given. Volunteers offering themselves at the boards were absorbed at once by rationing. And they explained rationing to the neighbors. But what was Price? Who knew about General Max? Not the volunteers. And not the neighbors.

Name Calling

The GMPR became legally effective at the retail level on May 11. But some prices continued to rise. Both the national office and the newspapers questioned whether retailers were abiding by their March

ceiling prices, whether in fact they even understood what was required of them. By law no retailer could charge more for a given article than his selling price in March 1942. By law he must keep at his place of business a record of his March prices. In addition he must file with OPA and post in his place of business a list showing the March selling price of all items designated as "cost-of-living" items. Only a comparison between cost-of-living price lists and prices on the shelves could prove whether an individual store was obeying the law.

In June the Price Department announced a national survey of retail outlets, "mainly for educational purposes."[9] The question immediately rose: who was to visit the Nation's two million retail outlets? Here surely was an opportunity for participation, and the literature of the women's organizations at this time shows they were aware of and ready for the task. Price Department thinking on the subject had not changed. Price Administrator Leon Henderson had said this was "the people's battle," but his deputy administrators talked in different tones. Dexter M. Keezer, Deputy for General Services, openly repeated his opinion that: "Self-appointed price policemen should be identified as fifth wheels and trouble makers."[10] Kenneth Galbraith, Deputy Administrator for Price, talked of eight to ten thousand paid inspectors and publicly promised the retailers that "no Gestapo of volunteer housewives" would be used for the survey.[11] Congress picked up the name-calling and "Snoopers!" echoed through Capitol Hill. But Congress, no fonder of paid inspectors than it was of volunteer snoopers, made a deep slash in the OPA budget, and "thousands of paid inspectors" were automatically eliminated from the argument.

The financial handwriting on the wall made an impression. On July 1 Dexter Keezer wrote that he had been misunderstood, that no more time should be wasted on the nonexistent issue of whether volunteers were to be used, that his only concern was one of having them properly trained. Price volunteers were accepted as a necessary aid in the price control scheme but the Price Division was still slow to work out the possibilities inherent in local participation, and for another 8 months failed to offer a program to the field offices.

The vacillation and name-calling of this first 6 months of price control made recruiting of price wardens or price panel assistants a difficult problem from then on. On April 15, 1942, President Roosevelt by Executive order had amended the directive of the Office of Civilian Defense. This agency was now authorized to:

> Assist other Federal agencies in carrying out their programs by mobilizing and making available to such agencies the services of the civilian population.

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[9] Washington Post, June 5, 1945.
[10] Speech before Congressional Wives, June 1942.
[11] Washington Post, June 5, 1942.

But even the Office of Civilian Defense was affected by these early OPA attitudes. They never wholeheartedly recruited for the service of price checking. National civic organizations refrained from urging their members to volunteer in a service so bitterly criticized both within and without the agency. The terms "price policemen", "Gestapo", "trouble-makers", and "snoopers" lingered on in the public mind and were not conducive to successful recruiting. They were not in fact conducive to participation in any form. Public policy at this time dealt a blow to participation from which the price program never wholly recovered. Many a housewife, who later accepted a juicy steak at more than ceiling price, excused herself with the thought that reporting the violation would be "snooping."

The Consumer Division Demonstrates

Richmond Fights Inflation [12]

The first national step toward community participation in price control was made by the Consumer Division, which still retained its early orientation and some of its social worker and public relations staff, and was under violent criticism in congressional quarters. The Division developed a plan to show what a community could and would do for itself to further the objectives of price control. The city of Richmond was invited to make a demonstration. The avowed objectives were: (1) a drive by the community to help all retailers complete their compliance with the requirements of the General Maximum Price Regulation; and (2) a drive to get the largest possible number of families in Richmond to understand, to sign, and to keep the consumer pledge not to buy above ceiling prices. In the words of a Division observer,

> Here was a campaign on *economics*. It had none of the emotional wallop of a recruitment drive for the Navy, which it immediately followed. None of the heart throb (and the years of familiarity) of a community chest campaign. None of the fireworks of a political election.
>
> And Richmond, like any large community, is sprawling and uncoordinated . . . a collection of civic bundles of every size and shape, only loosely tied together.
>
> In its particular way Richmond has its dividing lines . . . its tensions . . . its factionalisms . . . . and its own way of handling them.
>
> What, then, pulled Richmond together that so much could happen about Price Control between August 20 and 29?
>
> *It was not the Consumer Division* . . . though the Project Staff of the Consumer Division came to Richmond with a complete set of suggestions for community action. *It was not the OPA in Viriginia* . . . though the entire State

[12] This demonstration was carried on simultaneously in Richmond, Va., and Charlotte, N. C.

Office gave unstintingly of its efforts and support throughout the campaign. *It was the immediate, complete response of the leaders of the community to the concept of a program on price control conducted By the community as well as In it. . . .*[13]

This concept of the community and of participation included both retailers and consumers; it included the mayor and the merchants; it included trade and civic organizations; Negroes and whites, labor and the churches and the schools; and it included the housewives.

Certainly there were specific obstacles to be overcome in Richmond.

There were suspicions of "Washington" . . . suspicions that consumers might be "aroused" . . . suspicions that "snoopers" might be loosed on the town.

But significantly, these suspicions were only early weeds, and quickly uprooted.

The weed-killer was simple enough. It was no more than the explanation that here was a campaign to be conducted by the community as well as in it . . . by the community, not by "the Government."

Once that was made clear, suspicion turned into cooperation . . . and the rest was action![14]

Action of the 9-day campaign resulted in 4,320-column inches of locally initiated publicity; 14 radio programs, 85 special spot announcements; 2,323 retail stores visited by a trained corps of 370 volunteers; a 3-day clinic for local merchants conducted by merchants; 60,000 consumer pledges signed; and "1,300 people (exclusive of press, radio, and local officials) *participated directly* in making this campaign a success."

The results would seem to prove the validity of the technique. Richmond did participate; a city could mobilize its citizens for price control as for any other civic need, could mobilize for OPA the necessary "support of the great majority." But there were no further demonstrations. The plan met with disfavor at the national office where its sponsorship was unwelcome. The Consumer Division was a political liability. It was presently reorganized as the Community Service Division in the newly created Information Department. The value of the Richmond experience was lost to other cities,[15] and even for Richmond the experience went slightly sour. The promised follow-up programs were never sent; the 370 volunteers, hailed by press and radio, were never organized into a continuing program, never incorporated into the work of the local boards.

Whose Volunteer Plan?

By August 1942 the hard necessities of the budget, plus widespread violations of the GMPR, were convincing the OPA as a whole that some type of community participation in price control was a necessity.

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[13] Staff report, Victor Ratner, Consumer Division, August 1942.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] In 1944 and 1945 the Information Department revived this technique for its various slogan campaigns. But all too frequently the campaigns were divorced from the volunteer work at the local boards.

The Price Department, however, had made no positive move toward sending out any program, when on August 18 the Legal Division presented a plan for taking over both the volunteers and the local boards. At once there was a storm of protest.

The Legal Proposal

The Legal Division, through its New York Regional Office, had already made an excursion into the use of volunteers. Early in June, under the direction of Walter Gellhorn, Regional Attorney for OPA, 100 volunteers were recruited from patriotic and service organizations, given an hour's training, and sent out to buy gasoline *without their ration cards.* In the space of a few hours they uncovered hundreds of violators. Neither the volunteers nor their organizations enjoyed the experience,[16] but the Legal Division had its evidence.

In August, there was widespread disregard of GMPR, and the Legal Division was short on investigators. They remembered the New York gasoline cases. They proposed to take over the volunteers and they presented a plan which from the operational aspect left little to be desired. It retained and elaborated on the recruiting, training, and supervision outlined in the Sly plan. It rounded out the functions of the price panels, and it added an invaluable docket system for recording the action on complaints; but there was no mention of identifying insignia, only slight mention of the education of retailers, none of the maintenance of community support. The volunteers were to be trained by the Legal Division, supervised by the Legal Division, and used for enforcement. This was not a plan for voluntary compliance, nor neighborly persuasion; this was not community education. It was enforcement. The other divisions sprang to action. Within the next few weeks three full-fledged volunteer plans were submitted, and four departments, Price, Legal, Board Operations (the Office already handling local boards and rationing volunteers), and Personnel were contesting jurisdiction over the future price volunteers.

Protests

Within the first week Galbraith wrote a protesting memorandum to Hamm:

> The functions of the price wardens should not be restricted to, or even primarily, a matter of enforcement.
>
> Neither good public relations nor good administration is served by placing them under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Legal Division.
>
> . . . there appears to be some question . . . whether volunteers could be recruited through the Office of Civilian Defense on this basis.

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[16] New York Times, June 7, 1942.

> Specific responsibility for the content and for technical supervision of the particular projects must fall on the technical division primarily concerned with any given project.

Galbraith's memorandum was accompanied by the Price Department proposal on the "Use of Volunteers as Price and Rent Wardens." Galbraith made a clear and hitherto unrecognized distinction between the administrative and the technical phases of any use of volunteers. He reiterated his opinion that specific responsibility for technical supervision and training must rest with the technical division primarily concerned and he advocated placing responsibility "for recruiting, assigning, and supervising, directly on the organizational staff at the various levels." Aside from this the Price plan added nothing to the various other plans already presented.

The Organization Planning Office presented a memorandum [17] not only opposed to the legal plan, but to any type of adjudicative function for price panels. Yet some of its postulates eventually crystallized the functions of the early price panels. Their September memorandum said:

> It is contended here that the primary approach should not be legal. . . . but should be negotiatory. The problem is not to punish people for errors, nor to construct an elaborate adversary procedure for the settlement of what are likely to be large numbers of minor matters. It is rather to secure compliance with price regulations as expeditiously as possible and to use the process of settling complaints as an important administrative device for educating both retailer and public to the requirements of the price program.

And again:

> It is here reaffirmed that . . . compliance is a price administrative function, and that the process is not one of snooping and clubbing but of understanding and correcting.

Board Operations, following Galbraith's distinction between administrative and technical functions, was content to offer a "Procedure on Volunteer Assistance" accompanied by a memorandum pointing out that regardless of whose plan was accepted, the responsibility for local boards and local board personnel, paid or volunteer, belonged to the Office of Board Operations.

The Volunteer Viewpoint

The "Procedure," by Mrs. Dorothy Fredenhagen of the Volunteer Assistance Unit of Board Operations, was the first attempt to consider the volunteer contribution from the point of view of the volunteer. It was, in fact, the first recognition of some of the basic differ-

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[17] Memorandum, Harvey F. Pinney, "Price Control Administration at the Local Level," September 25, 1942.

ences in the problems of employing paid and unpaid workers. It was the first recognition that workers whose primary job lay elsewhere might be limited as to choice and amount of time. And it was the first recognition that people who gave their time through motives of patriotism rather than self-interest should be accorded a primary choice as to type of work, a knowledge of the background of the work (as well as its technical requirements), and a recognition for the results achieved.

The procedure did not meet with an enthusiastic reception. Most of the OPA staff involved in these discussions were themselves unfamiliar with volunteer techniques and lumped all personnel problems in one. In addition the procedure allocated to administrative supervision considerably more authority than any operating agency was willing to concede to it. Finally, as long as the price-legal controversy over jurisdiction was unsettled, no administrative procedure was likely to receive serious consideration. The total result was a continuing neglect of the underlying problems in volunteer participation. Recruitment and retention turned out to be the major headaches of of the volunteer program for the next 2 years. Acceptance at this time of the basic principles of the Fredenhagen procedure would have gone a long way toward curing the situation. Instead, Administrative Order 65 transferred all volunteer assistance from Board Operations to the jurisdiction of the Personnel Division and in the ensuing personnel shifts the procedure was temporarily side-tracked. One of its basic points, however, i. e., that volunteers should be supervised by volunteers or someone with volunteer experience, was picked up by the California Regional Office, where it brilliantly proved its worth within a few months.

Information's Channel to the Grass Roots

On November 2, 1942, a Board Administration Letter, apparently uncontested and almost unnoticed, authorized volunteer community service members for the local boards. The Information Division quietly achieved its own channel to the grass roots. According to the directive, the community service member was to be appointed "after consultation with the State information officer" and "shall be responsible for providing the community with accurate information on the programs and policies of the Office of Price Administration." On December 24 this authorization was supplemented by a joint statement of the Office of Price Administration and the Office of Civilian Defense. Where consumer committees of the local councils of defense were still in existence they were to become a part of, or have a liaison member on, the community service committee of the local OPA boards.

Some information officers were not interested in pushing the appointments and some district directors disapproved of allowing volunteers to give out information. Scarcely more than half the local boards ever had community service committees (the total membership for the country reached only 16,000 in July 1945), but their influence was far greater than their numbers would suggest. An aggressive information officer plus an active community service committee seldom failed to create an atmosphere favorable to OPA.

Stalemate

The main price-legal controversy was complicated on October 12 by an interpretation from the Office of the General Counsel in which he gave to the Legal Department full responsibility for compliance as well as enforcement. Neither department could proceed until this point was settled.

In the last 3 months of 1942 only one positive step was made toward community participation in price control. Henderson personally and publicly invited the cooperation of the housewives. He asked them to keep a record of the prices they paid for food for one week; then:

> Once the list is complete take it with you when you go marketing . . . If you think an item is being sold above ceiling talk it over with the storekeeper . . . Then if you aren't satisfied, report it to your War Price and Rationing Board.

Some of the housewives of the Nation made their lists and went marketing, but in most cases the local board had no price wardens to investigate their complaints and no price panel to adjudicate them. Leon Henderson resigned on December 18 and his invitation went no further than the first gesture. Housewives were still "the forgotten man" of price control.

December came and went with no final decision on jurisdiction over the fictional volunteers. The national office had come to virtual agreement upon the idea of using volunteers, but not upon the manner in which they could best function.

CHAPTER 4

Field Experiments, 1942

Although the national office sent out no price program in 1942 and the local boards were too busy with rationing to take the initiative, in between these two elevels, in the regions and the districts, an occasional executive with imagination and initiative devised an experiment in community price control. With only the authority of Leon Henderson's somewhat general reference to "ultimate functions," [1] these volunteer plans got under way.

An observer from the Price Deputy's office, writing on November 20, 1942, after an extensive field trip, summed up both the field situation and the national office ignorance in regard to it:

> It is no secret that Washington has been unable to develop any real program for local board operations. It may not be so widely known, however, that programs have sprung up almost at the grass roots in a number of States . . . these seem to follow similar patterns involving the use of panels to give information to retailers; to check compliance with posting and filing requirements; to serve as channels for the transmission to State offices of complaints against wholesalers and retailers; to provide information to State and district offices on the status of price control in the local communities; and generally to represent Price at the local level . . . Only one or two States have encouraged their local boards to perform all these functions but each job has been carried out successfully enough in one State or another for us to be sure that it will prove feasible almost everywhere with the right sort of management and supervision.
>
> The semi-legitimate character of most of these State programs makes it extraordinarily difficult to find out what they amount to . . . Probably almost every State is falsifying its reports, . . . mostly by omission of relevant facts.[2]

Not only was the national office ignorant of practices in the field, but regions generally had no knowledge of what was being done in other regions and even districts or States within the same region sometimes developed extensive volunteer programs, totally unaware of the

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[1] Local Board Price Letter, General Instruction No. 1, May 29, 1942.

[2] Memorandum, Owen S. Stratton, November 20, 1942.

volunteer work being done a few miles away. Three regional board reports, written in 1946, claim the distinction of having the first price panels functioning in the country. Examination of contemporary records indicates that in two of these cases, the panels, if appointed, did not function long and have left no trace of their existence.

Records of these early experiments are found in the regional office biweekly reports, in the Stratton field trip memoranda,[3] in the Board Operations' early reports, in the closing "histories" sent from some regions in 1946 and 1947, in local newspaper clippings, and in contemporary magazine articles. They are far from complete. Doubtless many more such trial balloons are buried in the regional files, in the yearly reports of participating organizations, and in the patriotic folklore of local communities. Following then is a bird's-eye view of the field experiments of 1942, as they have come to light.

New York First

"Volunteer assistance was decided upon as an organized project for Region II in May 1942, and allowed to lapse in September." [4]

OPA Region II, with headquarters in New York City, covered New York State, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. It had over 500,000 retail outlets within its jurisdiction. John F. Sly became Regional Price Executive in May 1942, and apparently moved at once to incorporate his early plan for Price Wardens into a unified "Volunteer Plan" for the region. On May 21, Sylvan Joseph, Regional Administrator, wrote to Washington:

> I am enclosing herewith the first draft of the plan for volunteers. This is being planned in conjunction with Price, Rationing, and Consumers Division so that we will do a unified job of recruiting, and each separate division takes the training, for the portion of the volunteers services they will use." [5]

In June the regional volunteer staff was set up under the regional organization officer; it consisted of a regional volunteer supervisor and five assistants. By July there was at least one paid supervisor of volunteers in each State.[6] But before these staff members were engaged and certainly before they were acclimated to their jobs the Price Division decided to use volunteers to visit the region's retailers (half

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[3] Memoranda, Owen S. Stratton, August–November 1942, in files of Executive Office for Price.

[4] Report of New York Volunteer Program, Mary Mason, November 26, 1942. Volunteer files.

[5] Memorandum, Sylvan Joseph, Regional Administrator, Region II, to Paul O'Leary, Deputy Administrator for Rationing, May 21, 1942.

[6] Manuscript, "History of Volunteers," Dorothy Fredenhagen, 1946.

a million of them!) on Cost-of-Living Posting Day, July 8, 1942.[7] This project called for more than a skeleton staff. Three hundred field representatives, paid employees of OPA, were detailed, trained, and sent to local communities all over the region, each to recruit, train, and organize the volunteers of a specific locality. Preceded by telegrams to the mayors, supplied with statistics on the number of stores and the population, they recruited through the local OCD and other community agencies. The training was done in free auditoriums; the volunteers were given written instructions for themselves and printed bulletins for the retailers. They were each given an identifying badge, and a report form to return to New York with the badge. Recruiting and training took about 3 weeks. During the whole period the program was supported by a vigorous publicity campaign. The goal was 50,000 volunteers, and 35,000 were actually recruited. Thus, even in the midst of the name-calling in Washington, Region II was able to recruit through the mayors and the local organizations 35,000 housewives who, wearing badges of identification and armed with bulletins explaining the posting requirements, called on some 300,000 retailers and invited them to go to their local War Price and Ration Boards for further information.

In discussing this project at the Chicago Regional Price Executives' conference in Chicago,[8] Sly reported that it was a great success from the public relations standpoint: The regional office had established important contacts with key people all over the region. They had received favorable publicity in both the local and metropolitan press. Even the movies and the radio had taken note of and reported favorably on the volunteer participation. But he expressed doubt on two other points. He questioned whether there would be any appreciable gain in compliance with posting requirements from store visits which were limited to the distribution of materials and an explanation of the posting requirements. He also doubted whether the region would have put in all this effort had they known beforehand "that there was no hope at this time of going ahead on . . . a permanent local organization in which to tie [the] nucleus of volunteers."

The next, and final, large volunteer project under the New York plan was in connection with the registration of landlords in defense areas. The Rent Division

> outlined the work to the regional volunteer assistance staff; the dates when it was to be carried out, and the number of workers needed . . . the volunteer assistance supervisors took the lead in the recruitment of workers . . . planned the training meetings . . . [used] local volunteer chairmen . . . and handled the publicity. The Rent Division undertook instruction at the meetings . . .

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[7] Report, Mary Mason, New York Regional Office, November 1942.

[8] Report, Meeting of Regional Price Executives, Chicago, Ill., July 1942.

In the 4 to 6 weeks' operation, volunteers contributed 100,000 hours and accurate registrations rose from 50 to 85 percent in the specific areas.

The New York Regional Office conducted two large scale operations in the use of volunteers, well-organized by the agency and well-received by the trade, economical for the agency and at least in rent successful in obtaining increased compliance. None of the reports explain why there "was no hope . . . of going ahead" but the epitaph of their plan is written in a few more lines from the November report:

> From August on [the work] was soft pedaled . . . operations were not supported by a national volunteer policy . . . the staff was disbanded and the work dropped.

Officially, the New York plan was at an end. Actually, later records show that a few far-sighted district officials, having found the volunteers, held on to them. In Newark, Camden, Trenton, Baltimore, and Syracuse, price panels were appointed and persisted more or less actively from the summer of 1942 on. Camden even had its volunteer wardens who visited the local merchants, checked their prices, and helped them with their posting problems.[9]

The New England States

Region I, according to a national office report, "has inadequate control over its State Offices . . . they tend to go their own ways."[10] And their own ways were as different in connection with volunteers as in other matters. Both industrial and rural New England were keenly aware of price control and equally determined to handle it themselves without "foreign" interference. Few other generalizations can be made but it should be noted that at a time when the national office was still in dubious debate over any use of volunteers in the price program, each of the New England States was working out its own solution through local democratic processes.

Little OPA's

In Rhode Island, the smallest State, the price panels were the most authoritative and effective in the country. Rhode Island appointed its price panels shortly after the Henderson directive of May 1942. After some months' experience in which the operation marked time on clerical work, the State Price Executive, George H. Arris, decided that Rhode Island volunteers were capable of more important func-

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[9] Edith Ellsworth, the Camden Price Executive, later became Price Panel Coordinator for all of Region II.

[10] Stratton report, November 17, 1942

tions. A former newspaper man, imaginative and resourceful, he turned his panels into "Little OPA's." He held training schools for price members. He issued a manual of procedural charts which graphically divided the panel meeting into its three functions:

First hour—Open to the public: To receive questions and complaints and distribute material.
Second hour—Closed to the public: For hearings on complaints.
Third hour—Closed to the public: For board conference.[11]

He imbued these panels with the belief that price control was a war measure essential to the welfare of the country, but fundamentally, a community problem to be handled by the community. Then he gave them authority, promised them State office backing, and urged them to use common sense.

The story of the Rhode Island panels has been dramatically told in a popular magazine. After a typical panel "hearing," the "violator" gets up to leave, and the chairman admonishes him once more:

"You're square all right, John," the chairman replied earnestly, "but I think you're careless, too. Gosh-hanged careless. The Government don't write these rules just for the fun of writing them. We got a war on. We got rules for the Army and we got rules for the civilians. And if the Army don't pay any more attention to the rules than you have, we'll lose the war tomorrow. Go back home, John, read that regulation and get your butter prices down where they belong."

John got up to leave.

"And don't forget to file them prices with us," Bassett added. "Let's have 'em tomorrow night."

"Now, wait a minute, Harry. That's going to take time. I got to figure all them mark-ups over, and I'm danged busy. It's going to be pretty inconvenient to do that tomorrow."

"I got a boy over in Tunisia," Harry said solemnly. "It's going to be pretty inconvenient for him to stand up and get shot. He may have to do that tomorrow too * * * Good night, John."[12]

Maine

With a population of 847,000, Maine had 50 War Price and Rationing Boards with four panels of 3 members each. "Maine has had a price panel on each and every local board since way back last summer; we have accomplished in one way or another every objective outlined in Memorandum 163, and in some cases more."[13] This report was made in 1943 when the national price program was launched but the Maine panels, like those of Rhode Island, had obviously been in operation since the summer of 1942.

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[11] See appendix for copies of Rhode Island charts.

[12] J. Howard Rutledge, The Little OPA: *Saturday Evening Post,* May 15, 1943.

[13] Biweekly report April 29, 1943, P. H. Vose, State Price Officer, to George R. Taylor, Regional Price Executive.

Maine's most publicized achievement occurred on September 28, 1942, when the price panel of Portland held a "Businessmen's Price Meeting" to which they invited all retailers of the State.[14]

Purpose of the meeting: to further educate businessmen in Community and Service Price Regulations.

They invited 40 Portland businessmen representing 20 trade groups to act as a steering committee.

Purpose of the committee: (1) to secure mass attendance at the meeting, (2) to serve as a permanent businessmen's advisory committee to the Portland price panel.

Several thousand invitations went out and 1,100 retailers attended. After the opening addresses the audience was divided into 7 trade groups and each group held a clinic for the study of its own regulation.

The Maine price panels not only went out after the businessmen, but they also reviewed the maximum price lists to be sure the businessmen understood and had complied with the filing requirements. There is no record that they made a corresponding check of posting within the stores or that, as in Rhode Island, they held hearings on prices that were out of line. But in the three largest cities, Portland, Lewiston, and Bangor, volunteer groups were formed after the Portland meeting. Toward the end of the year, Lewiston recruited "10 women to check prices." Old Town had its "group of deputy women to handle small outlying towns." The State Price Officer maintained that "this nonuniformity among panels is desirable," but added, "it is interesting to note that throughout Maine all cost-of-living lists as well as service filings are long since 100 percent filed and 100 percent reviewed.[15] Maine was ready for the next directive.

Massachusetts

In November 1942 the price panels of Massachusetts were "still in the state of being organized." [16] In a State with 351 boards only 130 price panels had been designated and these 130 had in most cases "been used so far for rationing or are standing idle." [16] In addition "a considerable amount of consumer interest" was "being completely neglected." [16]

In 1942 the Massachusetts League of Women Voters devoted one day of their annual conference to the subject of price control. Delegates from all over the State came to Boston to hear the OPA Regional Administrator and price attorney explain the provisions of the General Maximum Price Regulation. The week after the GMPR became

[14] The Portland Plan, Augusta, Maine, September 30, 1943.
[15] Biweekly report, April 29, 1943, quoted above.
[16] Memorandum, Owen S. Stratton, November 1942.

effective, members of the league held mass meetings for retailers in various cities. They distributed material, answered questions, and forwarded to Boston the questions not answered by the printed material. Later the women formed price checking committees and sent weekly reports to the Boston regional office. The local boards had no interest in price matters and the regional office took no action upon the reports. But consumer interest, once aroused, continued, and under the Massachusetts Public Safety Committee of CCD the women reported price trends from one end of the State to the other. Eventually price panels were organized in Massachusetts and in some parts of the State price panel assistants functioned successfully, but a large share of credit must go to the consumer committees outside OPA for keeping the compliance record of Massachusetts in line with that of her sister states.

New Hampshire

New Hampshire appointed price panels and attempted to analyze for them the differences between price and rationing:

> There are fundamental differences between the administration of rationing activities and price activities. The completion of a rationing task is automatic; when the last application has been processed and the last squawker turned away, then the job is done; but on price, there is no end whatsoever to the public ignorance which must be processed.[17]

In September the New Hampshire office prepared an excellent Manual for Price Panel Instruction (which required 3 visits by price officials to each panel), and issued a weekly bulletin to the boards, but according to a November report the panels were still inactive and the clerks were all busy on rationing.[18] Later records show that the price panel at Littleton, New Hampshire, was an exception to this observation. On June 9, 1943, the New Hampshire Price Executive wrote a memorandum on the "accomplishments of the Littleton price panel" in the hope that it would "serve as an inspiration to the price panels that had not participated actively in the program." The report points out that the board chairman had shown "an interest in the price control program which was exceptional among the chairmen of the 32 . . . boards in New Hampshire." Under "Statistical Information" it notes that the first meeting had been held "about October 1942," that to date it had held 104 meetings and interviewed 90 retailers. The population served was only 9,085, but quite evidently the panel was doing an excellent job of education and public relations.

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[17] Price Panel Instruction Syllabus, New Hampshire OPA, prepared September 1942.
[18] Memorandum, Owen S. Stratton to Laurence C. Vass, November 1942.

Vermont Works Out a Compliance Survey

According to the October regional report, Vermont with a population of only 380,000, had 40 local boards, a price panel in every board, and was the first State in New England to complete its check of the cost-of-living price lists.[19] On November 18, the State Price Officer visited the Waterbury price panel and worked out with them a new compliance program. The report of that meeting gives a complete outline of the compliance surveys that became standard for the country nine months later:

1. The panel will recruit some volunteers from the community.
2. With help from the State Office the volunteers will be trained in the use of a survey questionnaire.
3. The questionnaire will cover:
   (*a*) Whether cost-of-living lists are posted in the stores;
   (*b*) Whether cost-of-living lists have been filed with the board;
   (*c*) Whether a basic total price list is available in each store;
   (*d*) Whether a sampling of prices on the list agree with those on the shelves.
4. The panel will run a publicity campaign explaining that the board wishes to help those retailers who do not understand the regulation.
5. A copy of the questionnaire will be run in the local newspaper.
6. Each volunteer:
   (*a*) Calls on stores assigned to him;
   (*b*) Introduces himself to the manager;
   (*c*) Fills in the questionnaire;
   (*d*) Invites the manager to sign it if he wishes;
   (*e*) Files the questionnaire at the local board.
7. The panel will examine the survey forms, and retailers not in compliance will be invited to appear before the panel for a friendly discussion of the problem.

"Most retail violations," the price officer said, "are caused by ignorance. The job of the panel will be to keep the retailers out of trouble by educating them." [20]

Volunteers from the community trained for their work, publicized to the trade, were to visit retailers and explain the regulation to those who did not "understand". Retailers found to be "not in compliance" were to be invited to the panel meeting for a "friendly discussion". The panel was told that "most retail violations are caused by ignorance" and that it was their job to keep the retailers out of trouble. Here, stated apparently for the first time, is the whole theory of compliance by neighborly persuasion which the Sly plan foreshadowed and on which the national OPA built its program in 1943 and 1944.

A Board Chairman in Connecticut

In Connecticut a former volunteer board chairman, Chester Bowles, had been made State Director, and had concentrated on organizing

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[19] Weekly report, George R. Taylor, Regional Price Executive, Boston, to Laurence Vass, Washington, D. C., August 22, 1942.

[20] Memorandum. Owen S. Stratton to Laurence Vass, November 1942.

and publicizing the ration boards. In the fall of 1942 he sensed that price control held the same possibilities and needed the same attention. Talking with a national office representative, he said that "The metropolitan retail price problem could be licked by using price panels recruited from and supported by labor unions and consumers' groups." [21] Some months later he was carrying this impetus to the development of the price panel system for the whole country.

Across the Country

The Atlanta history (Region IV) records no volunteer price activity until late in 1943 and describes a typical local board where the least promising of the four clerks was put on price because "the price panel didn't meet anyway." [22] The author goes on to explain that price panels were appointed early in 1942 but "never used or instructed"; and if they did try to do anything they "got their ears pinned back by Enforcement."

The Virginia Plan

However, in Region IV, The "Virginia Plan" was in effect by October 1942.[23] Under this plan the three original ration board members were left in authority but a price advisor was appointed to help them and three merchant counselors were added under the "advisor" to instruct the merchants. The boards were already using volunteer specialists or advisors for each rationed commodity, and numerous volunteer clerical workers. Later reports indicate that these boards were and intended to remain industry information boards. When in 1943 compliance activities were added to panel functions the change was strenuously opposed by the board members.[24] However, organizationally this plan was fairly sound and even in 1942 it was an educational aid to price compliance.

Spartanburg—Point Rationing

Spartanburg, S. C., developed a type of volunteer service for OPA which probably had its counterpart in other Southern cities, but which is not mentioned elsewhere in the official records. Mrs. Jessie Davenport, colored teacher in the colored schools, was asked to organize the Negro population to do their share in the new defense controls. Mrs. Davenport talked in the schools and in lodges and churches. In the summer of 1942 she organized a group of 50 women to go into the Negro stores and show the grocers how to post their cost-of-living

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[21] *Ibid.*

[22] Atlanta History, local boards, p. 274.

[23] Report, Dr. Raymond B. Finchbeck, State Price Executive, to Joseph J. Spengler, Regional Price Executive, October 26, 1942.

[24] William Blaisdell's report to Rowe, April 1943, on Meeting of Board Members, files, Executive Office for Price.

lists. As Mrs. Davenport tells the story, when point rationing was announced she explained it over the radio, "that Sunday morning at 10." Notices had been sent to the schools for the children to tell their parents to listen. In the radio talk she asked each listener to bring his neighbors to the big mass meeting in the lodge. That afternoon at the mass meeting she again explained point rationing and told the people how they would be called to the schools to register, "alphabetically," and how they must "declare" the cans of vegetables they had on the shelves at home. "Lawyer Lambright sat on the platform" to clarify any points Mrs. Davenport could not answer. The following week Mrs. Davenport's group of 50 volunteer women went into the grocery stores again, to help grocers mark the price, and the points, on every can in the stores.[25]

The Price Panel in Laurel, Mississippi

Several national office field reports refer to the work of the price panels in Mississippi in the fall of 1942. So far as we know the earliest minutes of any price panel meeting are those from the board at Laurel, Mississippi. The first record from there dated October 13, 1942 indicates that the panel had been operating for sometime. It had a working grasp of the various price regulations and was emphasizing its educational job with the retailers. In addition it was handling its own publicity. Later reports show that price control changes were regularly recorded in the local paper.

The file now at the National Archives contains weekly reports for this panel from October 1942 through October 1945.[26] Its minutes show two things clearly: first, the panel was working effectively under the General Maximum Price Regulation, and second, it was working within a framework of training and programming from the State office. In Mississippi, as in New England, a field staff officer was able to translate the technicalities of GMPR into terms that could be understood and used for price control by volunteers of the local community.

No Experiments

Regions III and V did not initiate any experiments in community participation during 1942, nor do the States seem to have experimented on their own. But correspondence from these two regions points to some of the obstacles which had to be overcome before the volunteer program could succeed.

In the State of Ohio (in Region III) the local boards seem to have been completely under the control of the organization officer and

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[25] Personal interview. Mrs. Davenport later became a price clerk and then chief clerk of a War Price and Rationing Board in the District of Columbia.

[26] Administrative Records, Region IV, Sample City, Laurel, Miss.

he quite evidently was not promoting the price program in the boards. On November 5, 1942, he wrote to "all War Price and Rationing Boards" [27] that the Price Division was "pressing for the immediate appointment" of a "price advisor" to each board, and added:

> We appreciate that several months ago we recommended that price panels be used in other programs, and that such action was taken by most boards. However the Price Division now feels that they must have a "point of contact" on each board who will be informed on the price program . . . Since little or no action of a decision making nature will be necessary it will not be necessary to appoint a price panel of three men—and one person really is preferable.

Either the Price Division had failed to instruct and provide work for the earlier price panels or the organization officer was grasping all possible volunteers for the rationing work. It was this latter tendency on the part of the organizational staff which caused the price authorities in Washington in the following year (1943) to insist upon their own supervisory personnel for the boards; administrative supervision had its place, but it was no substitute for technical supervision and leadership.

The Regional Price Executive in Dallas (Region V) recognized the need for public consumer education as early as July 1942. He found widespread "deliberate noncompliance" among the retailers and felt that OPA efforts must be supplemented by "consumers revealing to the retailers that the consumer is interested in the price stabilization program." But he thought the consumer should do this "solely as a self-interested private individual" and fervently hoped that

> . . . OPA does not attempt to train large numbers of consumers, organize them, or take the responsibility for them. Already, some of the enthusiastic ladies in consumer centers are spraying the landscape with misinterpretations of the price regulations. . ." [28]

The Kenosha Plan

Chicago (Region VI) did not advise its districts on the volunteers, but up in Kenosha, Wisconsin, the State Chairman of Civil Defense, and the Chamber of Commerce, and the State Price Officer of OPA together worked out a plan of their own to ensure compliance with the law:

> The Kenosha plan provides for an educational and statistical survey of price posting and filing compliance by means of a door-to-door canvas of all service and retail outlets.[29]

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[27] Memorandum, Inwood Smith, State Organization Officer, Columbus, Ohio, November 5, 1942.

[28] Weekly progress report, week ending July 10, 1942, C. W. Nichols, Regional Price Executive, Dallas, Tex., to Laurence C. Vass, Executive Officer for Price, Washington, D. C.

[29] *Compliance Campaigns,* issued by the Trade Relations Branch, Retail Trade and Services Division, "The Kenosha Plan," Washington, D. C., November 6, 1942.

They recruited a group of 100 businessmen, trained them in the requirements of GMPR, and sent them on a door-to-door canvas of every service and retail outlet in the county. One thousand one hundred and twenty-three establishments were visited; only 48 percent had filed their cost-of-living lists, and only 61 percent were posting prices, but within 4 days after the survey was completed, "70 additional cost-of-living lists were filed with the County War Price and Rationing Boards . . . Under sponsorship of the Chamber of Commerce, dealers assumed responsibility for compliance as an aid to business." [30]

No Clerk Available

In Colorado (Region VII), as early as July, the Regional Administrator urged the appointment of both price panels and consumer relations specialists at the local boards,[31] but apparently no program was sent out. The Pueblo, Colo., history records that three members of the price panel were sworn in by August and held at least two trade meetings. The price chairman got out the cost-of-living lists and put each in a separate folder, but "no clerk could be spared" [32] for them and the panel seems to have been inactive until early in January 1943. At this date a price clerk was assigned to them and they went to work in earnest.

California Organizes

In California the record is clear.

Price Panels

Region VIII experimented first with a few panels in northern California. After an intensive training period the California office requested permission from Washington [33] to use these panel members for processing cost-of-living price lists. After a second wire [34] without response, California proceeded to take matters into its own hands and to organize the region.

On December 2, 1942, the Regional Price Executive sent a directive to all State price officers for the purpose of establishing "volunteer price staffs at the local board level." The need was clearly and forcefully stated:

> During the past few months, there has been a growing realization of the urgent necessity for bringing price control down to the community level . . .

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[30] *Ibid.*

[31] Clem Collins, Regional Administrator, Region VII, *Letter to All Directors,* July 10, 1942.

[32] History of Pueblo, Colo.

[33] Norman S. Buchanan, Regional Price Executive, to John Hamm, Senior Deputy, November 19, 1942.

[34] Norman S. Buchanan to Laurence C. Vass, Executive Officer for Price, December 1, 1942. Permission was eventually given December 21, 1942, by Bass, cleared by Thomas I. Emerson for Enforcement.

We cannot afford to delay action on this matter any longer. The tremendous potential power and effectiveness that is available through proper organization of volunteer workers at the board level, must be harnessed as soon as physically possible . . .

December 20 was given as the deadline by which organization officers were to have all price panels appointed, and training was to follow immediately at meetings in key cities attended by price panel members from the surrounding cities. Technical training on regulations was to be given by price specialists at the same conferences.

In addition to the training conferences, nine "Price Panel Bulletins" were outlined, to explain in detail the functions of price panels; and definitely establishing the limits of price panel authority. Among the functions were "Processing Cost of Living Price Lists," and "Processing Service Price Lists"; but all complaints and violations were to be transferred at once to the State offices and the directive mentions nothing as drastic as a panel "hearing."

Trade relations committees were to be set up under the supervision of the panels, one trade relations member to every 100 retail outlets. The specified functions of these committees were similar to those of the early price wardens but the difference in name indicates a difference in emphasis [35] which became more real during the next year. The trade relations committees were set up as a service to the merchants with no implications of protection for the consumer.

The line of authority for all volunteer work was clear and definite. California instituted a Board Coordinator in the district office through whom all administrative action had to be taken, and a Trade Relations Officer through whom all technical price contacts had to be made.

The Volunteer Supervisor

At about this time the San Francisco district office made an experiment which proved its worth so rapidly that within a few months it had been adopted as a basic part of the regional organization.

In December 1942 the San Francisco District Office . . . realized that someone who knew and understood volunteers must be placed in charge of working out a system for recruiting and supervising the many volunteers needed by the 88 boards under its jurisdiction. Francis Carroll, Director, called upon the Office of Civilian Defense to furnish them with a volunteer specialist who could devote her full time as a volunteer member of his staff to establishing a suitable volunteer program. The OCD named Mrs. Geraldine H. Dodge to fill that position.[36]

A housewife and mother with grown children, Mrs. Dodge brought to her position 20 years' experience in volunteer organizations such as the

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[35] Memorandum, Robert Stanton, Assistant Regional Price Executive, to Laurence Vass, Washington, D. C., November 20, 1942.

[36] Memorandum on Volunteer Program in Region VIII, by Mrs. Geraldine H. Dodge, November 25, 1943.

League of Women Voters, the Junior League, and Community Chest. She understood volunteer problems and was willing to take time to place workers in the types of work to which they were best suited, willing to supervise them carefully until they were competent in performing that work.

Her first step was an arrangement with the Red Cross and the American Women's Voluntary Services, to supply volunteers for the three largest boards of the city. Next she recruited volunteer supervisors to be responsible for the volunteers the organizations supplied. She soon had supervisors for each of San Francisco's 88 boards. To these supervisors she assigned the duties of: (1) recruiting sufficient volunteers for that board's needs, (2) training those volunteers in their specific duties, and (3) recording the number of hours worked by each volunteer. Within 1 month the number of volunteer hours worked in the boards increased by 50 percent. Seven months later she was made volunteer specialist for the whole region [37] and asked to work out her plans for 24,000 volunteers.

This was the first region-wide experiment in the organized use of volunteers on a continuous basis. It proved its value many times over both in the increase of hours worked by each volunteer and the decrease in volunteer turn-over.

By this combination of well-defined administrative and technical authority plus expert handling of the volunteers, California evolved a local board organization never surpassed and scarcely equalled in any other region. In spite of this superior machinery and coverage—or perhaps because of it—California's early use of price panels and price panel assistants was comparatively tentative and timid in scope of function. By the end of 1942 the panels were trained, thoroughly, to-begin what most of the Eastern States had finished some months before. The trade relations committees were set up to do an educational job, "a service to the merchants," and for a year they refused to go further; even as late as the summer of 1943 they refused to enlarge their functions to include compliance surveys or price checking.[38] But California's organization became a model for the national office in many respects and by 1945 the California method of handling volunteers became the accepted national pattern.

Need for National Leadership

By the end of 1942, although without official encouragement from the national office, almost all regional offices had sent memoranda to the district offices urging the appointment of price panels. Almost all dis-

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[37] California, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, and Nevada.

[38] Letter, Anne Flory, National Price Panel Coordinator, to John I. McTernan, Regional Enforcement Attorney, San Francisco, Calif., August 21, 1943.

trict price divisions, caught between the avalanche of new regulations and the wall of retailer ignorance (or indifference), had reached desperately toward the possibility of volunteer help. And enough experiments had been made to prove that wherever they were asked, the volunteers responded; that wherever they were given a definite program, they carried it out; and that even under the complicated regulations of 1942, given intelligent leadership from OPA, local participation in price control was effective. But it should be noted that each successful use of volunteers, price panels or price wardens, had behind it an organization staff that believed in and formulated the program. Later events bore out Sly's observations at the Chicago conference that three conditions were necessary for the successful use of volunteers:

> First, they must be carefully selected and adequately educated to do the thing that we would have them do. Secondly, there must be a local structure in which they could be properly and firmly fitted, and thirdly, they must be equipped with a permanent staff that would be able to keep such a large organization moving intelligently.[39]

Few States had been able to establish these conditions. Although effective experiments had been made in various parts of the country, only Rhode Island, Vermont, and Mississippi had steered panels through the list of "urgent clerical tasks" to the "ultimate functions" of an effective price panel system. No unifying price program had been sent out from the national office and no effort had been made to accomplish participation on a national scale. At the end of 1942, when the rationing program was being effectively administered by 60,000 volunteer board members, price control was still only a phrase to the great majority of the country's 5500 local boards and to the communities around them.

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[39] Excerpts from Regional Price Executives Conference, Chicago, Ill., July 25–29, 1942, Volunteer Files.

CHAPTER 5

Volunteers for Price Control

The national leadership necessary for wide-scale community participation in the price program was forthcoming in the spring of 1943. After a year of retail price control in which the national office had discouraged the consuming public and its own field staff from community action, a right-about-face occurred. The problem was then one of recapturing the attention of the public and reviving or converting the interest of the field staff.

Compliance Before Enforcement

The price-legal controversy over jurisdiction of volunteers had not yet been settled when, on January 20, Prentiss Brown was appointed OPA Administrator. On January 26 a memorandum from the Senior Deputy Administrator, John Hamm,[1] seemed to settle the issue in favor of the Legal Department; but this was revoked 2 days later. Between the date of this memorandum and March 16, evidence poured in from the field to support the price contention that OPA's first move should be an educational rather than a belligerent one, through the Price Department rather than the Legal. A field survey report made at this time argued that most violations were due to ignorance and confusion on the part of the retailer and, further, that the Hamm memorandum "ignores the real abiding and valuable functions which can be performed at the local level and saddles the volunteers with the performance of duties which will not be accepted locally."[2] The report concluded: "The advantages of securing a firm foundation in citizen support far outweigh criticism which can be made against lay participation in a regulatory activity." Reports of this type, the continuing rise in food prices, labor unrest such as was dramatized in the coal fields that spring, increasing evidence that price control lacked both community

[1] Memorandum, To all Regional Administrators, John Hamm, January 26, 1942.
[2] Report, A. G. Antolini, Region II, to J. Kenneth Galbraith, March 11, 1943.

support and understanding—these among other factors in a complicated situation determined the Deputy Administrator for Price that the time had arrived for a more explicit and enforceable method of price control than was provided under the General Maximum Price Regulation. Once persuaded, Galbraith used all his brilliance and energy to evolve and install a program of price control in which the community could really participate.

Not long after taking office Prentiss Brown received a call from an old friend and fellow townsman, Bruno Bitker, the OPA District Director in Milwaukee. Bitker, an attorney, had been a dollar-a-year consultant to Harriet Elliott; he believed ardently in community participation. He sketched for Brown the picture of price control locally administered. This was language a former elected representative of the people could understand. Brown promised that if his decision was in the affirmative he would make the first announcement in Milwaukee.

A Belated Invitation

On March 16, in Milwaukee therefore, Prentiss Brown put OPA on record for the first time as inviting the active participation of the women of the country, not merely as shoppers, nor even merely as complainers, but as full-fledged volunteer workers within the OPA price structure. He invited them to become price panel members and price panel assistants of the local boards, a "service to their community in line with the finest traditions of democracy, and perhaps without parallel in the history of local self-government."

Mr. Brown outlined for them the new plan of volunteer participation:

> . . . it is our considered judgment that satisfactory administration of the regulations can be secured only through the development of a staff of uncompensated personnel functioning through the machinery of the War Price and Rationing Boards.

He announced that a price panel would be appointed to each local board, a group of volunteers who would serve as a center of information on price control and as a friendly mediator and adjuster of violations. A corps of price panel assistants [3] would be recruited to aid the price panel. Prompt consideration would be given to the complaints of housewives and only violations which the price panel could not adjust by a process of mediation or friendly persuasion would be sent to the district office for legal action.

He told the women that this program was based on the assumption that the majority of retailers would comply with the regulations if they

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[3] No longer called "price wardens."

understood what was required of them, and that the honest majority must be protected from the chiselling of the minority. He presented this program "as an opportunity for the development of self-government."

This was a general invitation, not only to the women of that particular audience, but to all the men and women of the country to participate in the administration of the new program. The Price Department now asked volunteers to assume major responsibility for retail price control in the local boards.

Whose Responsibility?

It was none too soon. In March 1943 the cost-of-living index registered 122.8, an increase of more than 10 points during the first year of price control. Stabilization approached a political crisis. President Roosevelt issued his "Hold-the-Line" order on April 8, and "rollback" subsidies on major foods were announced. It was in this setting that the Price Department undertook to put dollars-and-cents ceilings on all important foods, with an impossibly tight timetable for preparations. These fixed prices were set, some at the national office (meats and soap), others, called "community prices," at the district offices. Grocery stores were divided into 4 groups based on their volume of sales, with price differentials between groups in amounts varying with the lines of merchandise. Under the regulation each store had to display its group number, as well as the OPA printed posters showing all dollar-and-cent prices. Here was price control the housewives could read; here was price control the volunteers could check.

With the advent of community pricing, the national office assumed leadership of the volunteer price program. In Staff Memorandum 163, April 16, Brown officially presented the new plan to the regional administrators, and announced that Price, not Legal, would have technical supervision over the volunteers. This was followed by a letter to the boards on April 27,[4] and one to the field staff on May 3.[5] All levels of the OPA staff were informed that price panels and price panel assistants were to be recruited at once, that they were to be used to educate retailers on the new food regulations, and that the district price staff was responsible for "technical operation of the program." But the official communications neglected to place the administrative responsibility for volunteers on any person or division at the district or regional level. This responsibility, so carefully defined (and lodged with Board Operations) in the volunteer "procedure" of the previous September, was entirely omitted in the spring directive. Who would

[4] Price Board Letter No. 3.
[5] Field Administrative Letter No. 23. See appendix.

initiate the program prior to the "technical" price training? Who was to "recruit at once"? Failure to settle this question accounted in a large degree for the uneven development of the program.

In May the new community pricing orders began to take effect and the national office Price Department announced the first grocery survey. Where were the price panel assistants who would do the checking? In a few cases rationing board chairmen appointed volunteer supervisors, or had already done so, and requested the supervisors to recruit and train price panel assistants. Occasionally alert information officers, such as those in Baltimore and Camden, having recruited volunteers for point-rationing "explainers" in March, continued to recruit price panel assistants in April. And sometimes enterprising community service members of the local boards, as in Mississippi, "took over [OCD] consumer committees as they were." [6] But for the most part, the price officers from the district offices were forced to do the recruiting and the training (both basic and technical), and the administration (arranging for space, materials, records to OCD, etc.), or it was left undone. The official directives failed to place the responsibility, and Price had neglected the local boards too long to expect them to welcome extra work and new problems.

For this reason the first national grocery survey announced by wire on May 6 and scheduled for May 12 and 13 (less than a month after the first directive of April 16), caught most districts and boards unprepared. The newly formed Price Panel Section in the national office made its contribution with the completeness and speed of the earliest rationing instructions. On May 7, it sent to the field complete instructions for the "Food Program for Price Panels." This contained a summary of the food regulations, instructions on conducting a store survey, forms to be used in this specific survey with detailed instructions for their use, and finally, a "Price Panel Assistant's Guide" including "Suggestions on How To Make Your Visit Successful." [7] These forms and instructions were the basic tools of the survey program for the next 2 years. They set the pattern for the direct, courteous, informative approach which made possible the success of volunteer checking. However, less than one-third of the 5,500 boards had price panels at this time and the records seem to indicate that not even 10 percent of the boards with price panels had price panel assistants. Reports from the regions in April show that many district directors and some price executives were not in accord with any plan for delegating compliance functions to the local boards.[8] Even where district officers were heartily in favor of the plan the district office

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[6] General Field Report, Dorothy Fredenhagen, June 18–July 5, 1943.

[7] See appendix.

[8] Decentralization Study, Vols. II and III.

price staff was too busy workingg on the new "community prices" to give the necessary attention to the new technique of recruiting and training hundreds of consumer-volunteers. The results of the survey were disappointing; the returns "spotty," "incomplete," and "indefinite." [9]

But in two cities at least, St. Louis and Milwaukee, neither of them with previous price panel experience, the survey results were not incomplete and not indefinite.

In St. Louis the district information officer used the price-watching committee of the St. Louis Information Center. Within a week, 180 women were recruited, trained in the new regulation, and sent out to contact the city's grocery stores. St. Louis reported on time with 100-percent coverage.

In Milwaukee, the City Labor Advisory Committee reported to Washington:

> The number of price panel assistants varies from 25 to as many as 75 members. They are principally women recruited from labor unions and various women's and church groups.
>
> At each of the panel organization meetings there were from 50 to 100 men and women in attendance. They were from the wards and precincts located within the jurisdiction of their particular local board. They were obviously serious and earnest in their readiness to take part in the homefront war. The meetings are opened by introducing the price panel members. Then the patriotic purpose of the panel is outlined, and the matters of procedure are aired. A brief questionnaire has been prepared which is distributed to all of the assistants present. Each one is given the names of specific stores upon whom he is to call on the first check-up. The first assignment (*which was completed by all panels in Milwaukee last week*) consisted of checking the selling prices on the principal items on the new community price list.[10]

This survey too, although 2 weeks late, was 100 percent complete.

Hurdles

Recruiting price panel assistants for 5,500 war price and rationing boards was obviously an enormous hurdle at this time. A few districts had recruited panel assistants in 1942, used them once or twice, and then, lacking a national program, had allowed them to drift away. In the spring of 1943 almost no district in the country was equipped to make a complete area-wide grocery survey. The Office of Civilian Defense was still furnishing volunteers for rationing, but OCD remembered the snooper charges of 1942 and felt doubtful about price panel assistants. It took time at both the national and regional levels

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[9] Report of May Survey to Regional Price Executives, Kenneth Rowe, Executive Officer for Price, July 19, 1943.

[10] Labor Advisory Committee Bulletin, OPA Labor Office, Washington, D. C., June 16, 1943.

to overcome this hesitance, and euthusiastic cooperation was never wholly accomplished in some areas.[11] Field visits from Washington in the spring of 1943 undoubtedly had a favorable effect upon OCD recruiting in the South and Southwest.[12] They reached OCD officials in every city in Regions IV and V, and in most places brought together OPA and OCD officials to thrash out the whole problem of volunteers. OCD had many legitimate complaints against OPA policy, or lack of policy, on this score, which were duly aired.

The happy result was the appointment of literally hundreds of volunteer supervisors and the recruitment of thousands of price panel assistants for the South and Southwest. In most parts of the country, however, volunteers from OCD had to be supplemented heavily by volunteers from other sources.

The second large obstacle between the price divisions in the district offices and a price program in the local boards was the lack of written training material. The national office at this time was not unaware of nor unsympathetic to the difficulties in the field. Anne Flory, formerly assistant to John Sly in New York, had been brought to Washington to work on the price panel program in the Executive Office for Price. In consultation with Enforcement she developed the forms, instructions, and "guide" for the first survey. Almost single-handed she developed the price panel program for the next year, but neither she nor the Training Branch in the Personnel Division was allowed to write manuals at this time. During 1942 the regions had developed a marked sense of autonomy, and resented the thought of a national training plan. In April the Executive Officer for Price had thought it necessary to promise the Regional Price Executives that: "The national office will not attempt to provide a standardized pattern of price panel operations—or program—except in minimum terms . . ."[13]

But in spite of obstacles, the national office knew that it was necessary to push the program, to insist upon action, both for the sake of the community pricing program and for fear of losing the volunteers already recruited.

The Price Division Recruits

In May the Consumer Index rose again, to 125.1, and on June 5, Prentiss Brown sent another directive to all regional administrators and district directors:[14]

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[11] Correspondence between OPA and OCD, volunteer files, March 1943–February 1944.
[12] Field Trip Reports, Dorothy Fredenhagen, February 1943–June 1943.
[13] Memorandum to all Regional Price Executives, Kenneth Rowe by William Blaisdell, April 1943.
[14] Memorandum, Prentiss Brown, Administrator, June 5, 1943.

The reports I have received . . . indicate that the price panel program is nowhere near on an operating basis . . . My reports are that very little progress has been made in the recruitment or training of price panel assistance . . . There are further reports that in a few offices *there is still resistance to the use of price panel assistants in checking dollars and cents prices.*

Then the Administrator announced the next survey:

I am holding each Regional Administrator personally responsible for having the Price Panel and Price Panel Assistants program in effective operation in his region not later than June 21 . . . It is my further direction that not later than June 28 you should have conducted throughout every area in which community flat prices are now in effect a comprehensive check by price panel assistants of retail compliance with those community flat prices.

The Price Divisions girded themselves for action. In four regions (Denver, Dallas, Chicago, and Atlanta), the price staff wrote manuals of procedure to cover every action from the district office level to the local boards and the volunteers. In Dallas the Assistant Regional Price Executive took 4 days out to write the 16-page manual covering every phase of recruitment, training, price-panel assistant survey action, and price-panel hearing procedure. In 3 more days the manual was presented to and cleared by the Information Division, Board Operations, and Enforcement. At the end of the week it was sent out over the signature of the Regional Administrator to every district and board in Region V. Within the next 9 weeks this region recruited and appointed 743 price panels, with an average of 3 members each, recruited and trained 4,954 price panel assistants, and, by the June 28 deadline, had checked for compliance 12,743 stores. Denver, Chicago, and Atlanta showed almost equal compliance activity.[15]

Not all districts were successful in the June organization push even where procedures had already been established. The new Acting District Director of Springfield, Mass., writing on May 8, expressed himself as being fully in accord with Mr. Brown's policies, but:

I believe it is not always appreciated by those who are not themselves in the field that organizational work of this character is necessarily slow . . .

It would perhaps have been somewhat easier to organize price panel activity in this area if we could have started from scratch. As it is now we have the problem of separating the price panels out from the rationing activities in which they have become involved; getting adequate personnel on the panels which in some cases will only be possible by displacing individuals who should never have been appointed . . . securing for them clerical services which . . . went by default to rationing, getting procedural and instructional materials out to them, educating the price clerks and the panel members in these procedures . . . All this is to my mind preliminary to the appointment of price panel assistants.

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[15] Report of Price Panel Program, To all Regional Price Executives, Kenneth Rowe by Anne Flory, August 23, 1943.

In many [boards] the need for price panel work must be sold to the chairman of the whole board, even to the members of the panel itself, and evidently to the community as a whole.

Not all regions wrote manuals; in which case State and district officers had to write their own procedure or improvise their action.

The June Survey, 1943

In the District of Columbia, an OPA district with 15 metropolitan boards, the Price Executive [16] wrote his own instructions and did his own training. With the aid of the Washington consumer interest committee, he picked and trained 15 captains, 1 for each board area. Through the committee chairman, Mrs. Charlotte Warner, he recruited and trained over 400 interested price checkers to work under the captains.

Training began at a June meeting in the Chamber of Commerce building where he first gave them a background talk on the purposes of price control: "Fourteen million people and their dependents, one-fifth of the Nation, service men among these, have no more money today than 3 years ago. Price control is necessary to protect their salaries and savings." Price control was necessary also to keep down the war debt. "If inflation devalues our dollar by 50 percent the war debt burden will be doubled." Then he told them that each checker and each individual housewife in the country had a personal responsibility for the success of price control. "You can't blame inflation on the wholesalers or the Black Market." The Black Market "is simply Mrs. Jones and her grocer multiplied a million times."

Each price checker was given her written pointers on the grocery regulation:

1. Each grocery store belongs to one of four groups.
2. The selling price of every item must be shown on or near the item.
3. The top legal prices of most groceries and meats appear on the printed posters which the grocer must display.

She was given her written instructions for the specific survey at hand:

The purpose of your visit is twofold:

(*a*) To assist the retailer in determining which group his store belongs to and to deliver to him the proper group sign.

(*b*) To check the prices and posting of prices for the commodities listed in column "a" of the survey form.

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[16] Sherwood Dodge, District Price Executive, District of Columbia, 1943–45. The following survey material is taken from several sources in his files.

The instructions contained a sample of the national office survey form, filled in, to show the assistant what she might expect to find:

Commodity	Brand	Style or grade	Size or weight	Price posted	Selling price	Top legal price	Compliance
Bread	Honey-top	Enriched	1 pound	Yes	$0.09	$0.09	Yes.
Coffee	Smith's	Drip	1 pound	Yes	.26	.22	No.
Canned corn	Maizette	Whole grain	12 ounces	No	.15	.15	No.
Spaghetti	Blue Circle	Thin	10 ounces	Yes	.11	.12	Yes.

And finally each volunteer was given her copy of the "Price Panel Assistant's Guide."

On the next day the captains and their assistants reported to the various local boards. Board 11 was in an old schoolhouse. The captain reported to the chief clerk who directed her to an empty room piled high with grocery group signs, meat, and community posters. On the desk was a pile of survey forms, each showing the name and address of some grocer in the area. The captain parcelled these out to her assistants, allowing about an hour's time for each store, gave each assistant a package of group numbers and community posters, and reminded her of the "Do's and Don'ts":

Do—be sure to introduce yourself to the manager and explain the purpose of your visit.

Do—call the retailer's attention to any over-ceiling prices and encourage him (*not* command him) to change them.

Don't—dispute or argue with the retailer. Remember that the majority of violations are likely to be mistakes rather than on purpose, and that no matter how impolitely you may be treated, the success of this program depends upon your tact and understanding.

Then the survey began. Mrs. Jones went first to a large independent grocery store. The owner, Mr. Blank, happened to be on the Grocery Advisory Committee for the city, he knew all about the survey, he was expecting her, and proudly showed Mrs. Jones around the store to see that the Group 2 sign was near the cash register and the dollar-and-cent posters all placed where they were easy for customers to read. Mr. Blank went with Mrs. Jones while she checked the prices on each of the 12 specified items. There was no price posted on the bread. Chagrinned, Mr. Blank explained that of course everyone knew the price of bread but he quickly siezed a cardboard and chalk, wrote 9 cents and stuck it up by the bread. Mr. Blank was pleased to see that Mrs. Jones wrote in the margin: "Corrected while I was there."

Mrs. Jones then went into a tiny store with no clerks and scarcely room for the owner in between the boxes. There was no group sign in sight and there were no posters. The owner spoke broken English. Mrs. Jones introduced herself and asked Mr. Green why his posters were not up for customers to read. After a few more questions, Mr. Green darted into the back room and came back with a pile of OPA material. "I no read English," he said. "My boy gone to Army. I no read. You tell me." Mrs. Jones told him, and together they put up "Group I" and the community poster. A few cans had prices on them and the prices were not above ceiling, but Mrs. Jones told him every can and every package must have a price on or near it and the prices must not be higher than those on the big poster. Mr. Green went eagerly to work and Mrs. Jones wrote the whole story on the back of the survey form.

Mrs. Jones' next store was a large meat market. The group sign was up but the meat poster was so far away behind the counter that no customer could read it and there were no prices or grades on the meat in the showcase. She suggested to the manager that he bring the poster forward where it could be read. He grudgingly complied, but when she asked about the lack of prices on the meat, Mr. Brown said the butcher was new, didn't know how to do anything right, and what did OPA mean, anyhow, by rolling back the price of beef 4 cents a pound? Mrs. Jones explained that the law required the prices to be posted, and she wrote "not posted" after each meat item on the survey.

At the next store there was a group sign but no posters; the manager admitted that a "lot of stuff" came to him but he didn't have time to read it. "Anyway," he said, "why do you pick on me? I'm an honest man, I've been in business for 21 years, and I've never had a dissatisfied customer. Why don't you go down to that place on the corner?" Mrs. Jones explained that she was going to the place on the corner, that the volunteers were going to every store in the city, and that one big purpose of these surveys was to protect the honest merchant against the chiseller. "I guess that's right," he said as he began putting up the poster, "we're all in this together; we might as well get on with it. You come back next week and you'll find everything all right." Mrs. Jones promised to come back.

At the corner store Mrs. Jones found numerous prices above the ceiling. When she pointed them out, Mr. Black said quickly that it was just a mistake and he changed them at once. But the mistakes were all "over" the ceiling and Mrs. Jones made a note to go back there next week, too.

So it went. The first survey was the hardest. When it was over and the survey forms tabulated, the record showed that on the 12 basic food items almost 1 in every 4 was being sold over the ceiling and only

46 percent of the stores in Washington were correctly priced on all 12 items. But of the 54 percent showing violations, there were many who had not understood, and honestly wanted the price panel assistants to come back the next week.[17]

When the regional records of the June survey [18] were all in, the policy of the national office was justified. All but some 300 of the 5500 local boards reported at least a beginning in the appointment of price panel members. Also, over half of the boards, 2,960, had recruited and used a total of 25,662 price panel assistants to survey their grocery stores. Both community pricing and the volunteer program were justified in the showing of the cost-of-living index. For the first time in 30 months the index dropped. On June 15 it stood at 124.8. Jubilant reports going back to the local boards urged them to "hold the line."

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[17] Table A, District of Columbia Report, July 8, 1943, in District of Columbia price files.
[18] Report to all Regional Price Executives, Price panel programs, August 23, 1943.

CHAPTER 6

Neighborly Persuasion

In the summer of 1943 OPA embarked upon an era of price control which may fairly be called the era of neighborly persuasion. On July 8 Chester Bowles, the persuasive State Director of Connecticut was brought to the national office as general manager to reorganize the Office of Price Administration "in line with the wishes of Congress." He was fully in accord with the price panel program. As a former advertising executive he saw the educational and public relations value in community participation. He had frequently reiterated his belief that 95 percent of all violations were due to ignorance or indifference and could be eradicated by education and friendly persuasion. He was committed to the development of the price panel system with emphasis on its function of friendly mediation.

Price Panel Development

A few days after his arrival, a message went forward in Prentiss Brown's name to the Regional Administrators on "Community participation in the Price Panel Program." It urged once more that the work should be extended to those areas which had not yet established price panels and that, where they were already functioning, the work should be encouraged and strengthened. It asked the Administrators to give this their immediate personal attention, since "on the success of our price panels depends in large measure our ability to hold the line against inflation." [1]

In the June survey, it is true, half the boards of the country had made a beginning at price checking, but price checking was only a part of the price panel system. The plan for volunteer participation envisaged by the national office directives called for a continuing and integrated program at the community level. It implied continuing store visits and continuing education of the retailers. It included

[1] Memorandum, Prentiss Brown, to all Regional Administrators, "Community Participation in Price Control", July 13, 1943.

prompt consideration for the complaints of housewives. It included friendly mediation for all minor and unwitting violations. Such a plan called for strong, well-trained price panels and "a local structure into which they could be properly and firmly fitted."

It is safe to assume that in view of the stress of the first community pricing and the first national grocery survey, the price panel organization was at best in the process of being developed. Under the spur of this July directive the panel appointments were pushed through.

Appointment

The panel members were drawn from lists submitted by the OCD, the labor unions, the women's clubs, citizens associations and consumer groups. Five members were usually chosen for each of the early price panels: a housewife, two business men, a professional, and a labor representative, "to represent the community as a whole." [2] From the beginning of the community pricing program, in most areas, efforts were made to give racial and minority groups representation.

Once appointed the new members had to be inducted into the local board, then trained for their new responsibilities. In many areas this first step, "induction," was as difficult as the second. Many ration board chairmen were indifferent, even hostile, to the price program, too many were jealous of their prestige as board members, and perhaps resented the use of "price chairman" as title for head of the price panel. The broad representational base of the price panels was an added cause for friction. In the District of Columbia one influential chairman held out for months against the appointment of any woman as a board member. In another area with a large Negro population the board chairman and all ration board members threatened to resign in a body when a prominent Negro was appointed to the price panel.[3] Several board chairmen were insistent that no labor representatives were needed, or wanted, on their price panels. In Washington, the District Director read his chairmen the directive on representation and pushed the appointments through. In most areas the board chairmen did not resign, but neither did they welcome the price panels. This attitude carried over in many cases to the chief clerks, so that neither space nor equipment was made available for the new volunteers. Rationing had been "enthroned" too long to accept gracefully the new adjudicators. To both board chairmen and chief clerks the price board members and price panel assistants seemed interlopers and rivals.

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[2] Field Administrative Letter No. 3, Rev., May 7, 1943.

[3] Negroes served on 6 of the 15 boards in Washington; only 2 chairmen made any objections; only 1 was offensive in the matter; none resigned.

Procedure

In spite of these obstacles, the price panels were appointed and sworn in at the local boards. The first task of the panel was then to establish its position in the community by overcoming public indifference and instilling confidence in the business groups as to its sincerity and impartiality.

Trade meetings were frequently the first approach taken by the new price panel. In boards with a small retailer population all the retailers of the area might be invited. Where this was out of the question, the meeting might be held for the retailers of some one group (grocers, restaurant operators, or laundrymen, for instance) who were about to be surveyed, or who for some reason were in particular need of trade education. A district office specialist was apt to make the main speech of the evening and introduce the new panel. In any case this was the opportunity for the panel to impress the retailers with the sincerity of their purpose, and to explain the educational and compliance methods of the price panel system. Such an introduction made the work of both price panel and price panel assistants much easier and more acceptable to the community.

Prompt consideration for the complaints of consumers was an important step in overcoming public indifference. The price panels were instructed that all consumer complaints must be investigated and acknowledged, that the complainant's name must never be disclosed without his consent, and that, when a violation existed, the complainant must always be informed of his right under the law to sue for three times the overcharge or $50, whichever was greater.[4] In Connecticut Chester Bowles had told his boards that "the success or failure of the price panel will rest to a large extent on the consideration given to consumer complaints whether they are real or imaginary."[5] The consumer complaint was the panel's most immediate contact with the consumers of the community.

The third step was the panel conference with individual retailers. After any survey the panel had to decide which retailers should receive a recheck, which ones needed warning letters, and which must be called for panel conferences. Definite violations, whether discovered from consumer complaints or compliance surveys, implied a panel conference with the retailer. This meeting was the real test of the panels' ability, and its success was measured by the number

[4] This right was modified by the act as amended, July 1944.

[5] Memorandum, Chester Bowles, to all war price and rationing boards, Connecticut, May 1943.

of cases it could adjust without referral to the district office. The members had been told:

> The purpose of the price panel system is not to see how many cases can be referred to the District Office for legal enforcement, but on the contrary, to see how many can be successfully disposed of by the community itself.[6]

According to instructions the retailer was called for conference at a specific hour convenient for him. He was to be introduced to the panel members, he was to be told that these were volunteers, neighbors, without legal power to fine or coerce him; he must be given a chance to tell his side of the story. Within this framework, if the chairman was an attorney, he could (and frequently did) give a 15-minute opening talk on the dangers of inflation. If, however, the chairman was himself proprietor of a neighboring store, he might say colloquially: "Mr. Blank, we've called you in here because the last grocery survey showed you were overcharging on hamburger. Now we're just a few volunteers from this neighborhood trying to help the Government keep prices down so the country won't go to pot while our boys are away at the war. We sort of stand between you and legal enforcement up at the district office. We want to explain the regulation to you and ask you why you aren't obeying the law." At this Mr. Blank usually protested that he had not meant to break the law, that he had not received the regulation, or had not understood it, and believed thoroughly in price control. The chairman then patiently explained the specific regulation to him and pointed out the inflationary effect of even minor price violations. If this was Mr. Blank's first summons, the chairman was apt to close with: "Now Mr. Blank we're not going to report you up at the district office this time; all we want is for you to go back and make your prices right. We're after price control in this board, not scalps." Of course if Mr. Blank refused to change his price, or was still overcharging when the price panel assistant called again, his case was "referred to the district office" for legal action. But this was the spirit in which most price panels approached their work. Over and over the chairmen explained, each in his own language, the dangers of inflation, the purpose of price control, the details of the specific regulation involved, and then to the best of their abilities persuaded the retailer into compliance.

Panel Authority

Not all retailers could be persuaded, and the panel's authority was then called into question. Early instructions to the panels gave

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[6] Price Panel Member Letter of Appointment, Robert K. Thompson, District Director, Washington, D. C.

them two sanctions: (1) the panel conference, and (2) referral to the district office for legal action. On August 3, 1943, a joint statement from the Legal and Price Divisions listed seven sanctions within the power of the panel, the first six of which were to be explored and exhausted before the seventh, referral to the district office, was to be taken.

1. Price panel conference.
2. The promise to comply.
3. Warning letter (from the price panel chairman).
4. Refund of the overcharge to the customer.
5. Contribution to the United States Treasury (when overcharged customers were unknown).
6. License warning (issued at the district office on certification by the panel).
7. Referral to the district office.

The first four sanctions were used freely and generally. The sixth sanction, license warning notice, depended upon cooperation from the Legal Division and was limited by that fact. The last, referral to the district office, was obviously a last resort and too frequent usage of it generally indicated a weak panel.

The fifth sanction, voluntary contributions to the United States Treasury, needs to be mentioned separately because apparently it was not delegated to the price panels in all regions. For the first 6 months of the new program only the reports from Regions IV and VII make any reference to it. Region VII evidently educated some of its price panels in the use of "voluntary contributions" even before the days of community pricing.[7] The January 1943 records of the Butte, Montana (Region VII) price panel indicate that: (1) a district office investigator worked with the panel, and (2) the panel, after a conference with the retailers, recommended a settlement *to the district office and received the district office confirmation* before the retailer was notified. This procedure seems to have been highly successful. Region IV, although it did not take voluntary contributions at such an early date, was, by the end of 1943, reporting monthly "thousands of dollars in voluntary contributions" to the United States Treasury. A report[8] by the price panel coordinator of the region explains the method:

In this area, when a merchant finds he has been selling an item above ceiling, the panel suggests to him that he may not only refund to the customer who has complained, but estimate how long he has been charging over the ceiling and therefore how many unknown customers he had overcharged. They then

[7] Records, price panel sessions, Silver Bow County war price and rationing board, Butte, Mont., January 1943.

[8] Price clerk news letter, Washington, D. C., February 12, 1942.

suggest that as an evidence of good faith he may wish to make this total refund to the United States Treasury.

It is significant that this region which was so successful in receiving voluntary contributions, eventually had to discourage them. Some panels overstepped the limits of their authority and, instead of suggesting contributions, were in fact imposing fines.[9] Evidently close district office supervision was a necessary precaution in the use of this sanction.

All of these sanctions except the last two were variations of neighborly persuasion. This use of community pressure was of course the expressed purpose of the price panel system, but it must always be remembered that panel mediation rested upon the foundation of legal action against flagrant violators. Without this, the panel was on shifting sands.

Unfortunately, the Legal Division was not always willing or able to give this support. The Price Division in district after district makes the complaint that Enforcement would not follow through on panel referrals of willful violators. This was variously attributed to Enforcement's indifference to small cases, or shortage of manpower to make the necessary investigations, or disposition deliberately to wash its hands of the price panel program when it lost technical control of the volunteers. One District Price Executive writes of a panel that resigned because Enforcement would take no action against a flagrant violator who defied the panel. Many districts report that whole retailer neighborhoods became careless and defiant when no action was taken against a known violator. All panels however did not resign, nor did Enforcement always fail to act, and many panels became expert in the use of their limited authority.

In general, four things were necessary to the success of a price panel. First, the members had to be committed wholeheartedly to the purposes of price control. Second, they had to be able to command the respect of the community. Third, the panel had to receive continuous training and encouragement from the Price Division. Fourth, it needed the assured support of the Enforcement Division.

Early Persuasion

Price panels were established in the local boards to educate the retailers, to give prompt consideration to consumer complaints, and to collect information on compliance. Where violations were found the panels were to attempt to adjust as many cases as possible "through friendly persuasion" and "to secure assurance that the violation will

[9] Interview, April 1947, with James Derrieux, Regional Administrator, Region IV, March 1943–April 1944.

not be repeated." Flagrant or repeated violations were to be referred to the district office, but it was the expressed hope of OPA that through this system "the vast proportion of cases" would be adjusted without formal action by the Enforcement staff.[10] Any evaluation of price panel work must be made in the light of these expressed purposes.

The most direct knowledge of the price panel hearings comes to us from the weekly "minutes" which each price panel clerk sent to the district office.[11] These minutes grew in sophistication as the price clerks learned their work, but even the early records give clear testimony of the attitude of the price panels and the problems with which they were confronted.

The Promise to Comply

All reports of the first panel meetings sound much alike. The panels decided upon methods of procedure and called the first violators for conference.

> Panel members discussed how they would conduct the price conference with the retailers. Mr. S was elected to be the spokesman for the panel.
>
> The first retailer interview was T's Market. Mr. T's son spoke in behalf of his father. He explained they are willing to comply but since neither his father or mother read or write the responsibility falls on him. He promised in the future he will devote more time to checking on the prices, he assured the panel that the next check would find the store in compliance.[12]

This was duplicated in essence week after week and in board after board. Both the panel members and the retailers were feeling their way. The panel members carefully explained the regulation; the retailers quickly gave, and the panel members rather quickly accepted, assurances that the violations would not be repeated.

> Mr. C was admitted . . . his store on second check showing six violations.
>
> Mr. B explained the seriousness of the violations, the importance of posting prices and complying with all OPA regulations.
>
> Mr. C was very grateful for the friendly explanation. He stated he was "for OPA 100 percent," and he thought it especially good for the "little man" in the grocery business. He promised to cooperate in every way.[13]

Later on, the "promise to comply" was a written statement which the retailer was asked to sign, but even in the early months of the

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[10] Staff Memorandum 163.

[11] At the close of local boards in 1946, the national office Records Branch designated certain boards in each region as "Record Boards" and others as "Principal City Boards." The price panel minutes of these two groups were designed as record material for the National Archives. At the time of this writing, they were not yet available. The following excerpts have been taken from a random collection of price panel minutes of four average size boards in one city, Washington, D. C.

[12] Price Panel Minutes, War Price and Rationing Board No. 12, Washington, D. C., August 4, 1943.

[13] Price Panel Minutes, War Price and Rationing Board No. 50, Washington, D. C.

program the panels were careful to extract and the price clerk was careful to record some form of this "assurance."

> The panel explained to the retailer just how the price panel stood between him and the Enforcement Division and was set up for the purpose of helping where such was needed. After this explanation, Mr. A thanked the Panel for the kindly way in which his case had been explained. He promised to cooperate in every way possible.
>
> Mr. T on third checking showed violations on overcharging and not posting his prices. He was most appreciative, and stated he did not understand the regulations, and would comply.
>
> Owners of the G Market were next interviewed on two consumer complaints, having overcharged on bacon and round steak. They promised to not let this happen again. They thanked the panel for their kindness and promised compliance.[14]

Almost all retailers gave the promise to comply, but inevitably sooner or later some reclacitrant defied the panel and the price clerk duly recorded that fact.

> Our fourth client was just the most ungrateful person, namely Mr. H. K.
>
> On August 30 [he] was checked for the third time showing two overcharges with nothing posted.
>
> The panel instructed the clerk to have Mr. K. come in and talk it over. His attitude was very ugly and uncouth. His first argument was that he was forced by the wholesale dealer to buy things he didn't need and couldn't sell, in order to buy certain things he wanted. When asked by the panel for the name of the dealer, he evaded the issue. When questioned by the panel in regard to his overcharge on tomato juice his statement was he only got a chance to sell it to "drunks" and if they could afford to spend for whiskey he would charge what he pleased for his tomato juice.
>
> When reminded of OPA ceiling prices, his answer was "To hell with OPA."
>
> It was very difficult for the panel to talk to this grocer. He had his own ideas and thoroughly understood the regulations in regard to his not posting prices and overcharges.
>
> The price clerk wishes at this point to make mention of the diplomacy in which the panel handled this situation. They stated to Mr. K. that they were very sorry of his attitude, and regretted that they had been unable to help him. It was the decision of the panel to refer this case to the district office.[15]

The price panel could not handle the case and, as instructed, they referred it to the district office. If legal enforcement did not materialize at this point the panel lost face and price control in the area suffered accordingly.

Conversely, if the Enforcement staff did act on a panel case of this sort the news of such action spread rapidly and had a chastening effect upon the whole area. By this same date another board in the city was

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[14] Price Panel Minutes, War Price and Rationing Board No. 50, Washington, D. C., September 23, 1943.

[15] Price Panel Minutes, War Price and Rationing Board No. 50, Washington, D. C., September 23, 1943.

humming with excitement because they had referred a "flagrant violator," Enforcement had acted, and word of the indictment had reached the newspapers. The price clerk's panel minutes for the district office note that:

> Today we had in the board seven grocers and three butchers, three telephone calls from same, two civilians on complaints and three restaurant men.
>
> S., the fellow being indicted called both yesterday and today for mark-ups on groceries and vegetables.
>
> . . . We are almost as busy as the Union Station in the Price Division of Board No. 31 since the recent newspaper publicity.[16]

A glance at the minutes of these same price panels in 1944, in June or July, shows very little change in procedure. The work had become so streamlined that seven or eight conferences could be held in one evening, but the panels were still explaining regulations. The "first violation" conferences were being held with restaurant men, or laundry men, or garage men. The majority of the conferences on any given night were these educational ones where the retailer was grateful for the explanation and promised to comply. But some retailers were in for their second or third or even fourth conference. These were the "repeaters" of small violations. Their violations, their excuses, and their promises to comply had not changed. On July 12, 1944, the price panel at Washington's Board 11 had four such grocers, one after the other:

> *W. market*—Mr. W, the owner, came in for conference. He had been in for a conference before but subsequent checks revealed continued violations. Mr. W's attention was called to the fact, that in any check, he has never posted his vegetables and fruits. His alibi was that he thought the posting of the community price list was sufficient. He said in the future they would be posted correctly. We are to check him in a week.
>
> *H.'s market*—Mrs. H. was in to answer to price and posting violations. She claimed she had not been receiving community price lists but is now receiving all. It was pointed out to her that she had a bad record. The panel advised her to improve considerably on the next check which will be next week.
>
> W's food shop—Mrs. E. appeared for her husband who is ill. A recent complaint was brought to her attention. She complained of a drunken butcher (whom she was trying to replace), a sick husband, an increased pay roll, shortage of help, lack of interest on the part of employees and the fact that she was overworked.
>
> We are to check her again in a week and she promised a marked improvement.
>
> *A's market*—Mr. K. came in for grocery violations and Mr. L., the manager of the meat section, was told of violations in his department. Both men stated that since the OPA advised them they were in violation they have posted everything. However, conversation revealed that they do not post grades on meats they said everything would be O. K. when we checked them next week.

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[16] Price Panel Minutes, War Price and Rationing Board No. 31, Washington, D. C., September 23, 1943.

These excuses, which were valid enough during the first 6 months of community pricing or at the first conference, ceased to have much validity at the third or fourth conference. However, since Enforcement had no time for such small violations, the panel could only do its best to keep them within bounds by frequent checking and occasional conferences.

Consumer Complaints

According to instructions, consumer complaints always came first on the agenda and the reports bear evidence of the amount of time and patience the panels expended on them.

Where a violation was shown, the complainant was informed of his right of suit under the law. Surprisingly few took advantage of this, but most complainants were dissatisfied with the return of a 2- or 3-cent overcharge, and wanted OPA to "do something about it." A retailer's past record counted heavily and not infrequently decided both panel and complainant on their course of action.

> Fourth case. Mr. B. reports that he purchased at this delicatessen a box of crackers for 45 cents, he presented receipt showing he had been overcharged 16 cents.
>
> Mr. S. asked Mr. A. if he had anything to say. His reply was he was taken to the hospital in January and came back to his store the middle of February . . . that truthfully he was not aware of the correct selling price until he called the price clerk and had her figure his mark-up. He offered to refund the 16 cents to Mr. B. He asked the panel members if they thought he would be so foolish to give a receipt if he had any intention of wrong doing. Mr. S. asked Mr. B. what he wanted and Mr. B. replied he thought he would take it to court and sue for $50 damages.
>
> Mr. S. reminded Mr. B. . . . This man (grocer) had been checked six times in the past 3 months and each time was found in compliance and had never had a complaint or occasion to be called before the board before . . . he would advise Mr. B. to give Mr. A. another chance and then if he is caught wilfully overcharging he will be dealt with severely by the board.
>
> At this point Mr. B made the statement he would think it over and on second thought he probably wouldn't sue at all.
>
> Money will be refunded. Case dismissed.[17]

All cases did not present such clear-cut overcharges and the panels sometimes felt they needed the wisdom of Solomon to mediate equitably. The resourcefulness and patience of the panel members was tested to the utmost by these borderline cases which often took on the aspects of a neighborhood quarrel, and yet, to the individuals involved, represented the reality of price control. Here, if anywhere, the time-consuming system of friendly persuasion was fully justified:

> The price clerk then admitted Mr. and Mrs. H and their father who had been called to this meeting of the price panel on complaint of a customer that they had

[17] Price Panel Minutes, Board No. 31, Washington, D. C., March 8, 1944.

charged $10 for one loaf of Halle Kosher bread weighing 10 pounds. The chairman opened the conference. The following are the essential points brought out in the discussion.

CHAIRMAN. You have not filed ceiling prices on this bread?

Mrs. H. Yes; in name of New Home Bakery.

PANEL MEMBER. Tell the whole story.

Mr. H. Mr. O comes in, I know him very well. Will you make me a big Halle? I don't care what it will cost. No; I haven't got a baker. Can't Sam make it? I can't tell you how much it will cost—the labor will cost more than the bread is worth. I don't care, I'm willing to pay $10 or $15. Will have 150 people at the party.

Mr. H. I came down to bakery at 2 o'clock. Mr. O called me on the phone—don't want 15 pounds but 10 pounds. We did not get a baker—could not. It turned out beautiful. We called Mr. O and told him. A lady came down. What is the price of the bread? Mr. H said $10, I'm not charging for the ingredients of the bread but for the labor. Mrs. O called at 2 p. m. Monday, I want to talk about something urgent. She wanted to talk about the price of the bread—the $10 charge. The Union called, "What do mean by charging Brother O $20 for a loaf of bread? I told him my side of it and he said "that is a different story." The next thing we are here.

PANEL MEMBER. You have no bill showing how much you charged in March 1942?

Mrs. H. No.

PANEL MEMBER. Then you must accept as your ceiling price the price charged by your nearest competitions, $1 to $2. You must also put in writing, or post, the ceiling price of the things you sell. A price must always be set. You can't figure the price of labor separately.

Mrs. H. If you could talk to Mr. O, I think we can settle on a price.

PANEL MEMBER. You yourself may take it up with Mr. O and settle it.

Mrs. H. My father-in-law will go to his place of business and they will settle the price.

The price panel adjourned at 5:30 p. m.

Addenda: On Thursday Mrs. H. brought her list of ceiling prices in to the price clerk and swore before a notary that they were her March 1942 prices. She reported that Mr. H had finally contacted Mr. O with the intention of making refund but Mr. O said "I want to drop the whole matter."

The price clerk called Mr. O to be sure that this was true and his wife said it was not, that no offer to refund had been made and that if no satisfactory refund was made they would sue for $50.

The price clerk then advised Mrs. H to press the matter of a refund to Mr. O in order to avoid the suit and also further action on the part of the OPA.

On November 15 Mrs. H mailed a check for $8 to Mr. O as a refund.[18]

As the panels learned to work on durable goods (refrigerators, washing machines, automobiles, etc.), the refunds became more sizeable and the complainants more eager to get their money back. District reports showing refunds, board by board, spurred the panels on, and in December 1943 we find the panel was "elated * * * that Board 31 had effected refunds [to customers] to the amount of $319 during the past 2 weeks."[19] Five months later in May 1944,

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[18] Price Panel Minutes, Board No. 12, Washington, D. C., November 10, 1943.

[19] Price Panel Minutes, Board No. 31, December 15, 1943.

the same panel reported "price activities of board since June 1943, as follows: 1,118 store visits, 102 panel conferences, 11 referrals [to district office], $823.69 in refunds." [20] The amount of customer refunds increased steadily for each month of panel operation and the records show that transforming consumer complaints into these refunds frequently took even more time and patience than was needed for the $10 loaf of bread.

A Failure of Neighborly Persuasion

Panels were not so successful in settling the meat violations which crop up early in the records of all boards. These violations were brought to the panel in large numbers, both through consumer complaints and surveys. The amount of overcharge was usually small and difficult to prove, and the retailers generally fought attempts at mediation. From the beginning they claimed they were caught between two fires, the wholesaler and the consumer, and that unless OPA could take care of the wholesalers, they, the retailers, must take advantage of the consumers or go out of existence. Perhaps the national OPA was fully aware of this and did all it could. However that may be, the signs were present from the beginning of the price panel records, pointing all too clearly to the eventual debacle of the meat program.

In the following instance, as early as October 1943, a panel, flooded with meat complaints, attempted an educational conference.

> Next to appear for conference at 9 p. m. were four butchers to be instructed and educated in the proper regulations regarding prices, postings, and grading of meats, as this board had received numerous complaints regarding said butchers for the past 2 weeks. Mr. S told butchers the situation regarding complaints in this area was shameful and had to be corrected at once. . . . Mr. S asked butchers if it were not true that at various times each butcher had been visited and checked by both price captain also price clerk and instructed as to the proper regulations—reply—yes. . . .
>
> Butchers complained this method of sending complaints into board was unfair, as many times in the case of a roast of beef naturally the weight would not be the same when originally weighed with bone in as it would be with the bones taken out. Board members granted same to be true and instructed said butchers, hereafter when delivering such purchases, just to mark the word trim, "TRIM so much" on the sales sheet. . . .
>
> Mr. H told butchers that if they were being forced to do something that was illegal then it was their duty as good citizens to make this known to this board, that this would undoubtedly save them time in court, money, injunctions, and suspension of business. Mr. S pointed out that there was no sense in them getting in violation just because the other fellow was doing so—you know what you should pay, you should come to the right people for your own protection,

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[20] *Ibid.* May 16, 1944.

people that can save and help you, otherwise you are as responsible as the wholesaler.

Mr. S pointed out that sometimes the laws seem hard, they are not meant for the individual, so if you are hit hard you have to take it and be satisfied the same as others and be content to get along until this conflict is over, to which Mr. M stated, he was not content to just get along, he was in business to make money, while he was here, as he did not know if he would be alive after the war. Mr. H stated if you are not willing to sell at ceiling prices then it is better to shut your doors and go out of business. * * *

Mr. M stated his biggest grouch was, that in regard to wholesalers he had to keep his mouth shut. Mr. M stated he knew of a man turned in a wholesaler for meat overcharges, now this butcher (retailer) is black-balled and can't get any meat from the wholesalers.[21]

Restaurant proprietors also claimed overcharges by the wholesale meat men and displayed the same fear of losing their supplies if they complained to the OPA.

Mr. H of the T Cafe, had raised 16 prices on the menus which had been picked up on the last survey. He stated that the girl who usually makes the menus is ill in the hospital and he had to have someone else make them and he was too busy to check them. * * *

Mrs. R asked why mistakes are always made up instead of down.

Mr. H admitted that the chef wouldn't dare to make it down. He said that he had raised the price of the chicken dinners because his dealer had been giving him 3-pound chickens instead of 2½-pound ones and that he would have to have the extra price.

He was told that he could petition but that he would have to show an over-all loss. No; he couldn't do that, he made $13,000 last year but he felt that was not a good return on $100,000 business. . . . He said that he pays more for meat than he did a year ago.

Mr. S challenged him on that remark.

He said that the meat men have ways of getting around prices, he is always charged for AA beef but is sent other grades. He was asked the name of his wholesaler but refused to tell as he said a "number of us men" are going to get the dope and then take them to court, but they want to be sure that they will be able to buy somewhere else.[22]

Housewives made this same complaint that they paid (points and money) for double A beef and got something tougher. The most frequent violation found on surveys was the failure to post price and grade of the cuts of meat in the meat case. Since the price varied according to the grade, this made it almost impossible for the average shopper to know whether she was being properly charged. The price panel assistants, the price clerks, and the panels spent a large amount of their time and persuasive abilities in attempting to get prices posted in the meat cases. In areas where the checkers were persistent, the butchers merely left the meat cases empty and kept their meat in the refrigerators. Not until the days of the Administrator's Claim when

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[21] Price Panel Minutes, Board No. 31, Washington, D. C., October 20, 1943.

[22] Price Panel Minutes, Board No. 12, Washington, D. C., May 17, 1944.

the panels demanded invoices was there any chance at the board level of proving meat violations.[23]

By the middle of 1944 almost all active panels had held at least one educational "trade meeting" with meat violators, had referred their most flagrant violators to the district office, and had reported again and again, both that they had a suspiciously high number of consumer complaints on meat, and that meat men when called to conference all claimed overcharges by the wholesalers. In the fall of 1944 the national office sent a special crew of meat investigators into 8 or 10 large eastern cities. They found the panel alarms more than justified. The panels had done their part in reporting this situation, but it cannot be claimed that neighborly persuasion accomplished compliance in the meat trade.

Accomplishments

By the end of the first year of their existence the panels had proved their ability as educators. The great majority of violators called before them did not need to be called again. The neighborly, informal, but purposeful atmosphere of the panel conference was ideal for handling consumer complaints. The panels satisfied customer and retailer in thousands upon thousands of cases. In the first 6 months of 1944 alone they successfully mediated 127,529 cases which otherwise might have clogged the dockets of the 93 district offices.

It is true that the percentage of repeaters, or persistent violators, was larger than had been anticipated at the inception of the program, and their recurring presence at the conference table was a severe test of the patience of the panel members. The flagrant violator could be referred to the district office but Enforcement was not interested in the retailer with only small violations in posting or price. Although the panels knew that failure to post frequently concealed price violations, and although they knew that continued small price violations added up to alarming amounts, they were helpless at this time to do more than check the stores, keep the tally, and record the promises to comply. The panels fulfilled their purpose in correcting the large number of violations due to ignorance or indifference, but clearly some other method or some increased authority was needed to reach the small persistent violator.

On deep-seated dislocations of the price-control structure, such as the meat situation proved to be, the price panels had no real effect. But the records of the panels proved they were a barometer in this respect and perhaps their reports should have been considered more carefully at the time.

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[23] Hamburger was an exception to this generalization. Hamburger, i. e., ground meat, had only one price regardless of grade.

In summing up, the greatest contribution of the early price panels lay in their persuasive education of that great majority of retailers who were violating through ignorance or indifference, who were called for one panel conference and never needed to be called again. Education and neighborhood pressure were necessary and effective in these cases.

To the everlasting credit of the price panels and of price control under OPA, this necessary "education" was generally given in a neighborly spirit. Where this was so, OPA earned the judgment passed upon one of its price panels by the proprietor of a small corner grocery who was called for conference. The price chairman of this board was himself a grocer. He was scrupulously careful not to sit in judgment upon a competitor, but he opened the meeting as usual before turning it over to his labor member assistant. Carefully and earnestly, as he had explained to violator after violator at meeting after meeting, he told the elderly proprietor and his apprehensive wife the reasons why grocery men should join the fight against inflation. In words of one syllable he explained the purpose of the panel, the requirements of the regulation, and the retailer's own offense. Then he asked the offender for his side of the story. At this point the old man turned reassuringly to his wife with the words: "See, Momma? See? It's like what I told you. It's a democracy."

CHAPTER 7

Chester Bowles Gives a Lift

On November 8, 1943, Chester Bowles, formerly a local volunteer, was sworn in as OPA Administrator. His influence on the volunteer program had been felt from the time he became General Manager in July. He saw the price panels as a part of the larger problem of general community participation and support. He saw too that the price panels themselves needed community understanding if they were to function effectively. He set about expanding the channels by which the message of price control could be carried to and from the people. He enlarged and increased the various advisory committees, he urged and provided for more effective use of the information or community service panels at the local boards, and at every opportunity he told the American public the story of the work being done by volunteers in the local communities.

Introduction by Radio

In Connecticut Bowles had given weekly radio talks, telling the people of his State what they needed to know, or do, about sharing in war time, and about fighting inflation. He continued these talks from Washington on a national hook-up. He asked each of his administrators, regional and district, to do the same locally, to go on the air for 15 minutes each week to explain the most immediate local problem of price control or rationing. Knowing the problems of the local boards at first hand, he emphasized support and recognition for their work.

Thus he made them the theme of one of his first radio talks from Washington:

I can tell you best about the make-up of the local boards in my own home State of Connecticut, where I used to work for OPA. Up there we have 172 boards run by 1,739 members. Here is a list of the different groups included among those members. There are 156 farmers, 209 housewives, 43 insurance men, 20 doctors and 8 dentists, 47 nurses, 97 school teachers, 237 industrial

workers, 32 attorneys, 53 engineers, 127 storekeepers and store clerks, 21 clergymen, 15 carpenters, 11 electricians, and 10 plumbers.

From that list, which is pretty typical throughout the country, I think you will agree that our OPA local board members are a pretty complete cross section of the everyday people who are our friends and neighbors. Every group and every nationality, every social level and every religion is well-represented. And that's the way rationing and price control should be handled among a democratic people.

Let's look even more closely at some of those people who are running the local boards up in Connecticut. Let's review the local board in Essex, my home town. . . .

He then described each of the 10 members: A veteran employed by a local manufacturer, a dairy farmer with a son in the Navy, the town nurse, the driver of a bakery truck, a housewife who was also soloist in the Baptist church choir, an oil salesman, a woman war worker from the CIO, a member of the school board with a son in the Navy, the owner of the feed store with a son in the Navy, and a manufacturer with two sons in the Army. He introducted them each by name; then said he knew there were hundreds and thousands of similar boards over the country, in Crossroads, Tex., and in Smalltown, Ala. "They're all doing the same job for you and me and their country."

A few months later, on November 2, he talked again: "This is a people's program. It will be successful only if you people understand it and help make it work." He told them he felt it was definitely OPA's responsibility to see that the people got proper information on OPA's plans and projects; then, "If you have that information and if we in OPA do a good job, I'm sure we'll get your full cooperation and support." He proceeded to explain how OPA's operating cost was relatively low because of the thousands of patriotic volunteers working in the local boards. "If they were paid," he said, "at the same rate as a Grade 2 Government file clerk, the cost to the taxpayers would be $3,500,000 extra per month."

With these and similar talks he made the public aware of the work being done by volunteers and then attempted to eradicate the stigma which in 1942 had become attached to volunteer work in the price program. He was never wholly successful (the "snooper" charge was revived again and again by various trade journals), but he did succeed in creating an atmosphere which made a better price control job possible.

Advisory Committees

At Bowles' first press conference in July he told the reporters he considered it a primary duty for OPA to inform the public as fully as possible concerning the reasons for OPA's actions. At his first meeting with the regional administrators, he added that regulations

whenever possible should be explained to the people in advance, and that, if time permitted, the people should be consulted. In line with this expressed policy he expanded the consultation with industry advisory committees, pushed the appointment of labor members on the panels, and by administrative order established a consumer advisory committee.

Consultation With Industry

Industry advisory committees were prescribed in the Emergency Price Control Act, upon request of a specific industry, but on June 7, 1943, Prentiss Brown extended an invitation for full industry participation. He issued an order for the establishment of industry advisory committees throughout the agency, "as a matter of administrative policy rather than as a grudging concession to the demands of industry exercising their rights under the act." A few months later Chester Bowles went even further and directed that "no new price regulation or major amendment should be issued without consultation with a representative advisory committee from industry." In addition, district directors were instructed to set up industry advisory committees in each district to advise on the administration of each major commodity.

Later in the year Bowles went on the air to explain to the public the contribution of the 435 industry advisory committees with their 7,500 members. He said to the public:

> You know, it isn't easy for a businessman to work on these committees. Because the first thing we ask him to do is completely to reverse his normal thinking. A man has spent years in competitive business fighting for his particular firm. He has competed with all comers, and has brought his company out on top simply because he stayed in there and pitched for that company. Then he comes down to Washington to serve on an advisory committee with the OPA.
>
> First we ask him to represent—not in terms of the company he's spent years fighting for—but the entire industry of which his company is only a part. That means he becomes a spokesman for his competitors and his own company without distinction. And then, when he's done that—we ask him to go even farther, and fit that whole industry into the entire price control picture. It is a great tribute to American businessmen that they have been willing to do that kind of a job for the good of the war effort. And the men on our 435 industry advisory committees are coming through magnificently.[1]

Labor Cooperation

The Labor Policy Committee, a national volunteer committee composed of representatives from the AFL, CIO, and Railway Brotherhoods, had been appointed by Leon Henderson in June 1942. In March 1943 Prentiss Brown expanded labor participation by requesting that

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[1] Radio talk, Chester Bowles, April 18, 1944, Blue Network.

each district director set up a volunteer District Labor Advisory Committee and that a labor member should be appointed to each price and rationing panel. In issuing his request he made the following statement:

> Widespread consumer support is indispensable to the success of the OPA program. The largest single consumer group in the country is organized labor, representing more than 10,000,000 families. Organized labor is solidly in support of successful price control, rent control and rationing. The labor movement has the organized means for making its support effective. Provision must be made for actual participation in the OPA program by trade union members.[2]

Bowles took every opportunity to urge labor representation at the boards and to utilize the cooperation offered by labor. In October, at the convention of the American Federation of Labor, he was able to say:

> Today this close relationship extends all the way from the OPA offices where national policy is made in Washington right down to the grass roots where local OPA War Price and Rationing Boards are working effectively with union locals.
>
> Today, more than 700 representatives of organized labor are serving as members of 92 District OPA Labor Advisory Committees in every State in the Union.
>
> . . . more than 4,000 union members are serving as members of local War Price and Rationing Boards throughout the country, and their number is constantly increasing.
>
> Today, thousands upon thousands of union members are serving on plant transportation committees in an effort to cut gasoline use to the minimum. And thousands more, including many members of your ladies' auxiliaries are serving as OPA price panel assistants in an effort to keep retail prices from selling over ceiling.[3]

Consumer Advisory Committee

On November 30, 1943, by Administrative Order 88, Bowles established the National Consumer Advisory Committee as a channel for consultation with the people and "to make available to the operating departments of OPA the viewpoint of the purchaser and user of consumer goods." Thirty members were appointed to this committee by the Administrator: (1) from among those participating in the consumer programs of national organizations and (2) from representative leaders in the field of consumer economics, marketing, clothing, food, and public relations.

The first committee meetings were held on December 1 in Washington and on December 7 the committee's first recommendations were sent to the Administrator:

> The Consumer Advisory Committee wishes to express its appreciation of your action in setting up this committee, and of your recognition of the right of

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[2] Memorandum, To all Regional Administrators and District Managers, Prentiss Brown, March 9, 1943.

[3] Speech, Chester Bowles, American Federation of Labor Convention, October 9, 1943.

consumers to speak for their interest in formulation of OPA policies. . . . On the basis of our discussions, the committee submits to you the following recommendations:

1. We recommend that for as many commodities as possible price ceilings should be established in dollars-and-cents terms.

2. We oppose the proposed "average store mark-up" as a basis for price control. . . .

3. In order that housewives may be better informed about community prices, we recommend that a price guide be available for housewives throughout the country and that ample lists of the store posters giving top legal prices he made available for each housewife who desires one. . . .

4. We are vitally concerned with the problem of bringing low-end clothing lines back into the market. . . .

5. We recognize that OPA cannot carry out its responsibility to control prices without the power to use subsidies where necessary.[4]

The national committee met quarterly and, because of its broad representation was able to bring both to the Administrator and to operating departments of OPA the viewpoint of the consumers in general and the women's organizations in particular. The committee frequently complained that they were consulted only after a regulation had been changed, or too late to exert their influence upon a proposed change. The operating departments explained that they were usually working under great pressure and the timing of changes was frequently forced by events (or agencies) beyond the control of OPA. However, "if time permitted," the committee was consulted and their records show that more than once they were able to exert influence for the benefit of the general public as opposed to that of some special interest hammering at the doors of a particular operating department. Even when these consumer representatives were unable to change the course of events, they were able to carry back to their organizations and thence to thousands upon thousands of consumers a first hand explanation of whatever action OPA was taking.

In June 1944 Bowles initiated the appointment of consumer advisory committees in the district offices. As at the national level, the district members were to be representatives of the various women's organizations of the area. Their function was one of liaison. They formulated and presented recommendations on such critical situations as the black market in meat, clothing shortages, and evasion of the rent law. However, their greatest contribution was undoubtedly in taking back to their organizations and communities the explanation of local OPA situations as given to them by the district directors. Unfortunately, many district directors thought of the consumer committees as another chore added to an already busy schedule,

[4] Memorandum to Chester Bowles from National Consumer Advisory Committee, December 7, 1943.

instead of seeing in them a valuable tool ready for use. The majority of the consumer committees were not set up until the last year of OPA.

The Homefront Pledge

Not content with informing the people about price control and its local operation, Bowles wanted them each, individually, to take some positive action. For the millions who could not volunteer their time in the boards he encouraged the homefront pledge to enlist them in the fight against inflation. This campaign was the particular project of the Information Department and their community service volunteers at the local boards. Community service members had been authorized as early as November 1942, but comparatively few had been appointed and no programs had been sent from the national office. Now, in line with the expansion of the information service at all levels, the community service members were reorganized, new members were recruited, and they were given the homefront pledge to carry to their communities.

A June 1943 Office of War Information survey [5] of housewives and shoppers in 72 areas had shown how appallingly few understood or were even aware of their obligation under the price control law. Reduced to its simplest terms this obligation was printed on a sticker showing a housewife with her right hand raised repeating the pledge:

"I pay no more than legal prices.

"I accept no rationed goods without giving up ration stamps."

Under the general supervision of the district information executives and the community service volunteers these stickers and the accompanying pledges to be signed were broadcast over the country during the fall of 1943. Mrs. Roosevelt and her housekeeper launched the campaign by signing at the door of the White House. Then in district after district OPA volunteers carried the pledges through the community; regular volunteers gave them to rationing applicants at the counters; price panel assistants carried them on surveys; the community service members distributed them through consumers' groups, women's clubs, union meetings, and parent-teacher association meetings. Retailers displayed the large colored posters in their stores or used the mats provided by Information in their newspaper advertising. In Louisville, 3,000 Boy Scouts called at homes getting the signature and leaving stickers, so that passersby would know that a home was a "Homefront Pledge Home." In Cincinnati, Girl Scouts had pledge booths at the theaters. In dozens of cities school teachers

[5] OWI Survey, No. 73, June 1943.

cooperated and thousands of school children carried the pledges home to their parents.

In New Orleans where the pledge idea originated, the campaign was carried out by the OCD War Block Service in a 48-hour whirlwind campaign. 250,000 people signed the pledge in those 2 days, and within 1 week the food prices of New Orleans showed a 5-percent drop.[6]

Under the leadership of the community volunteers over 200,000 other volunteers participated actively in getting the pledges signed, and over 20,000,000 people pledged themselves to participate in price control, pledged themselves not to buy above ceiling price and not to accept rationed goods without giving up ration stamps.

Second Anniversary

January 5, 1944, was the second anniversary of the War Price and Rationing Boards. During the preceding 6 months Chester Bowles had used all the facilities of OPA to sell to the American public (and incidentally to the OPA staff) the idea of local self-government in price control. He had established channels for fulfilling his early promise of explaining OPA actions to the people and consulting with the people. In this short space of time 20,000,000 people had signed the pledge to cooperate; the number of board members, price and rationing, had grown to 76,000; the regular clerical volunteers to 34,000; the community service members had more than doubled (from 4,000 to 8,600); and the hastily recruited price panel assistants had become a trained group of 28,000. This second anniversary of the boards was marked by laudatory press notices from coast to coast; Governors of many States made special proclamations in honor of OPA volunteers; testimonial luncheons were given for them; more than 85,000 volunteers were presented with the OPA service award signifying hundreds of hours of service. Board chairmen received lapel pins in recognition of their work and each volunteer who had given over 500 hours received a specal pin.[7]

On that day, January 5, 1944, Chester Bowles presented to the head of the National Archives in Washington, the history of each local board written by the board members themselves, "an important chapter in the history of the Nation during the war." [8] In a letter of congratulation to the board personnel he told them he had been reading the records they sent in, that he noticed how they solved the dozens

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[6] Memorandum, Chester Bowles, to all local board chairmen, September 13, 1943.
[7] Advance Press Release, Second Anniversary, January 5, 1944.
[8] Advance Press Release, Second Anniversary, January 5, 1944.

of human problems "that no regulation ever provided for." He quoted for them the epitaph proposed by the chairman of a board in New England:

> "Here lies a member of the Warwick War Price and Rationing Board.
> He served without hope of reward. He received none."

He quoted also the comments written by the board members in Sherborn, Mass.:

> The members of the board always have been active in the community life of the town. They know and respect the people they serve; they know their way of life and their problems. The people they serve know and respect the board. They trust them sufficiently to present their problems honestly, without concealing doubtful facts, with the belief that they will get a fair deal . . .
>
> Most of all, every member of this board feels that no American citizen approaches the board as a suppliant asking a favor, but as one good citizen finding out from another good citizen his fair share of a scarce commodity. We are here to serve, not to exercise power, and the longer we serve, the greater respect we have for the people we serve.

His letter ended with a summons to continued effort:

> I wish I could assure you that the job is about finished, or that it will be easy from now on . . . But I can't do that . . . some of our hardest problems may still lie ahead. . . .

In his anniversary radio talk, Bowles interviewed three members of local boards: T. W. Thagard, a board chairman from Greenville, Ala., a farmer turned lawyer; Mrs. Lillian Turner, a price panel assistant from Denver, Colo., the mother of six children, three of whom were in the Army; and Henry E. Libby, chairman of the gasoline panel in Island Falls, Maine, a farmer and soil conservationist. Bowles had each describe his service award, in behalf of the thousands of volunteers who were receiving their awards locally.

He closed his anniversary talk with a greeting from President Roosevelt. The following paragraphs at least should be remembered in any evaluation of the work of OPA volunteers:

> We are the only Nation in the world where volunteers are doing this job. In the way it has been done, it's as American as baseball.
>
> Perhaps some Americans have been impatient with their board at times. They may have had to wait in line too long. Or maybe they have been told "no" to their request for more gas, or more points, or more profit than the ceiling price allowed. So they "beefed" a little—because that's the way Americans let off steam under pressure—but with rare exceptions they have complied with the law. The few chiselers who have turned up are objects of contempt to all good citizens. Whenever caught they will be punished and, whether caught or not, I am sure that they must always carry with them the knowledge that they have let our country down in this—its greatest war.

Thus Bowles discharged his primary obligation to the local board volunteers: he introduced and interpreted them to the public, and he publicly acknowledged and awarded their services to OPA. The ration board personnel were now secure and recognized in their honorable positions; the price board volunteers were accepted and supported by the majority of the OPA price staff; they were no longer sneered at by the newspapers; they were at least on trial with the trade; and in general they were beginning to believe in themselves and their obligation to perform a difficult but necessary war job. By the beginning of 1944, Bowles had achieved a climate favorable to the work of the volunteers in OPA and had inspired those volunteers with a firm belief in the power of neighborly persuasion.

CHAPTER 8

Price Panel Assistants

Price panel assistants, the price checkers of the first May and June surveys of 1943, were the storm center of all arguments about the use of volunteers in OPA. It was around them that the snooper charges flew. In spite of this, their number grew from the first survey to January 1944. But even 28,000 volunteers were not sufficient to make monthly visits to the Nation's 600,000 food stores. They were certainly not sufficient to make additional surveys of the thousands of restaurants and service outlets.

In 1943 when Prentiss Brown spoke in Milwaukee, community pricing had not been fully decided upon and the later extensive need for price panel assistants was not foreseen. He said then that a "small" group of price panel assistants would aid the price panel "to distribute . . . explanatory material" and "to explain . . . the terms of the regulation" to retailers. April and May directives to the field were not much more explicit. Recruiting was a roundabout matter through the board chairman and the OCD at the request of price chairmen. Training was almost passed over, the price panel and district price representative were to "make such arrangements . . . as required." But actually by May, community pricing had become a fact and the role of the price panel assistant had become one of the utmost importance in the compliance program. The early failure to give dignity and definiteness to the position of these volunteers contributed to the later difficulties of recruiting for this, the most exacting volunteer job in OPA.

The price panel assistants were asked to go out into the retail neighborhood to distribute explanatory material to the retailers, to investigate complaints, and to check on posting and price compliance. This took courage, initiative, tact, and intelligence. An OWI Survey in one city noted that the maority of the price panel assistants who stayed on the job were college women. The majority were also housewives and frequently they were mothers whose hours of freedom were strictly

limited. But taking the country as a whole the people attracted to, and willing or able to stick by, the survey work were as varied as the communities in which they worked. Their contribution in hours was equally varied. Some individual checkers gave almost as much time as the paid clerks. Others could give only a few hours when someone came in to take care of the baby. Some pushed the baby buggies ahead of them as they checked. One group of young mothers in a city suburb took turns, half of them tending the children week and week about while the other half checked. College students in all parts of the country took part in this work, returning veterans enlisted for it, and labor union members checked during their lunch hour. The common denominator of all price panel assistants was a staunch belief in the necessity for price control.

At the beginning of 1944 the organizational problems surrounding the price panel assistants had not yet been solved. They were, in fact, only beginning to be recognized. The third of John Sly's necessary conditions was lacking: the "permanent staff" was not adequate "to keep such a large organization moving intelligently."[1] Because of this, recruitment of volunteers took a disproportionate amount of staff time, surveys were not made systematically, and there was an alarming backlog of price panel cases.[2] Very few people had yet realized the size of the volunteer staff needed to accomplish the avowed purposes of the program. Still less did they seem to realize the number and type of staff members needed to direct such a large number of volunteers.

In February 1942 Sly had told the national office that from five to eight thousand paid district supervisors would be needed to administer an adequate corps of price wardens. A few months later, in Region II, he used 35,000 volunteers to visit the region's 500,000 retail outlets. He used nearly 300 paid staff members to recruit and train these volunteers. Of these staff members, 6 at the regional level and at least 1 in each State, were trained volunteer specialists, a total of 11 volunteer specialists in addition to the technical staff of several hundred. By contrast the price panel assistants of January 1944 seem very few indeed; there were no less than 35,000 for the whole country and, outside of California, there were no volunteer specialists to train them.

In March 1943 when the price panel program was being set up, a second attempt was made to impress upon the operating divisions of OPA the size of the task being undertaken. Bruce Melvin, then head of the volunteer section in the national office, wrote a memoran-

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[1] Report on Volunteers in Region II, John Sly, Chicago Convention, July 1942.

[2] Of 131,890 stores visited in January, 47,995 were in violation, but only 12,122 conferences were held; Price Panel Operations Report, Board Management files, January 1944.

dum to Kenneth Warner, head personnel officer, asking for an annual budget of $811,460, "for promoting volunteer activities . . . in the War Price and Rationing Boards . . . valued at $66,000,000 per annum." He estimated that the program as outlined would need by July 1 (1943):

1. 150,000–200,000 additional clerical workers.
2. 200,000 volunteers for the programs proposed for Price and Information * * *.
3. 1,000,000 trained reserves for peak loads.

He requested a national office professional staff of seven people, with a comparable regional staff, and two or three people at each district office to administer the volunteer program. No one outside his own staff seems to have taken him very seriously. The Personnel Division knew that 30,000 clerical volunteers for rationing had been recruited and trained with only some incidental help from the district organizational staff. It took some time for the national OPA to realize that in spite of directives and change of name the board chairman and the chief clerks felt little responsibility for price volunteers. It took even longer for the national office to realize that the number of volunteers needed for price work was many times the number used in rationing. In January 1944 the total staff of the national office volunteer section was still two professionals, and no budget was provided for any volunteer staff at the other levels. At the district level no paid staff was specifically assigned to the administrative supervision of the price volunteers.

Technical Supervision

Technical supervision of the price volunteers was the responsibility of the Price Division at all levels. Galbraith's early and clear distinction between the technical and the administrative supervision of volunteers was forgotten when the program was set up in 1943. Field Administrative Letter No. 23 told the board chairman to appoint a volunteer assistant supervisor with the duty, among others, of recruiting the needed volunteers through the Office of Civilian Defense. But only a handful of board chairmen did so. The price divisions therefore not only had technical supervision of the volunteers, but also, by default, for the first year of the program, the responsibility for recruitment, basic training, record keeping, and assignment of the volunteers.

In January 1944, when the number of price volunteers reached a new peak, the price staff responsible for all these things was ludicrously inadequate. At the national office one person was still carry-

ing the price panel program single handed: formulating the surveys, devising the forms, and writing the instructions; consulting with Legal and the Training Branch, and Information; studying the return reports, and evaluating them for the Executive Office for Price.

At the regional and district levels the same situation existed. The district price panel coordinator or program specialist was responsible for digesting all the regulations [3] now delegated to the local boards and transmitting them in simple form to price clerks and panel members; for training price clerks and panel members in price panel procedures; for recruiting the hundreds of price panel assistants needed for the district, for training them, and assigning them to individual boards; was responsible in most districts for a weekly news letter to the boards; and everywhere was responsible for a monthly report to the region summarizing and evaluating the work of the boards of that district. It is safe to say that no price panel organization was developed in any district unless the district price executive and a large share of the whole price staff pitched in and helped.[4]

In local boards the situation was even more desperate. The records indicate that there were 4,300 price panels at this time but only 2,406 full time price clerks and another 3,022 part time clerks—not even 1 clerk to a panel. Where she existed, this lone clerk was responsible for at least a superficial familiarity with the grocery regulations, the restaurant regulation, the services regulation, the used durable goods regulation, and all durable goods regulations with fixed dollars-and-cents prices; for filing all price material and all retailer records; for answering consumer and retailer inquiries—or transmitting them to the district office; for assigning individual survey forms to particular price panel assistants; frequently was responsible for training them in specific surveys; and always was responsible for being tactful enough to hold their interest.

This situation was impossible both technically and administratively. Price panel assistants were recruited 1 month and lost the next because no one at the board had time to assign new work to them. In the fall the Homefront Pledge Campaign interested millions of consumers and they cooperated by sending in thousands of complaints, many of which could be neither investigated nor answered.[5] Where surveys were made, the few panel members (usually five to a board at this time) were unable to hold conferences with more than a fraction of the violators. The very success of OPA's publicity campaign with its sudden expansion of board activity almost wrecked the system at this time.

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[3] The Loose Leaf Service carried only the grocery regulation at this time.

[4] Weekly Progress Report, Region I, George Taylor to Kenneth Galbraith, May 15, 1943.

[5] Although 25,000 consumer complaints were being settled monthly, the backlog in January and February was over 11,000, and in March this jumped to more than 17,000; report of Price Panel Operations,T–802, March 1944.

In January the national office was taking remedial steps and by May the price panel staff at all levels had been increased by more than 300 percent.[6] But in the intervening months price clerks left because of overwork, price panels assistants left for lack of work, complaints went unanswered, and the backlog of panel cases piled higher. The Price Division staff hung on grimly.

The Emergency Price Check

In March 1944 before many of the new price staff had been engaged, the national office announced an all-out emergency price check of every grocery store in the country. In spite of the really serious staff problems, Kenneth Hampton, the new chief of the newly organized Price Panel Section, felt it was necessary to push the grocery surveys if the momentum of the last few months was not to be lost. By this very insistance upon more and more surveys, the national office forced through the staff expansion in record time.

Over the country survey work was still irregular and spotty but belief in the compliance value of store visits was growing. Back in June 1943, only 74,000 had been checked, but wherever rechecks were made the records showed improved compliance. In the District of Columbia where surveys had been made every month, the record changed from 76 percent compliance on the items checked in June, to 96 percent compliance on the same 12 basic food items by February 1944. There had been 9,000 individual store visits between these 2 dates. Because of this type of evidence from various parts of the country, the national office now demanded that every food store in the country should be checked within 1 week in March. To accomplish this the district directors were authorized to use every individual on the district and local board staffs, not only the Price but also Rationing, Information, and Board Operations people; not only the volunteers, but also the paid staff. Every employee, compensated or uncompensated, was asked to cooperate. Across the country they responded. The progress of one region provides an interesting example.

The Emergency Price Check in Region III

Until the beginning of community pricing in 1943, Region III had made no attempts at price panel activity. Since then the regional office had given it concerted direction. According to the regional history:[7]

In late 1943 the whole price panel organization—price clerks, panel members and assistants—had been built up so as to make it possible for each community

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[6] Budget Records, January–May 1944. Monthly Key Operating Reports January–May 1944, Office of Budget and Planning.

[7] History of OPA, Region III, vol. 1, p. 341, item 10K.20, *OPA Bibliography 1940–47.*

to fight its own battle against inflation . . . Already the organization had justified itself, but it remained for this period to prove whether it would be a continuing success or a "flash in the pan."

Region III now saw that to achieve the March goal further additions would have to be made to both paid and volunteer staffs. Recruitment continued because "many price panel assistants had resigned and had to be replaced." Not only were new price panel assistants recruited, but 223 new price clerks were also added at the boards. The number of the field staff increased until there was one supervisor for each 8 boards. Since surveys lost at least half their compliance value without panel members to review them, 525 new members were appointed to the panels. With these reinforcements, Cleveland launched the Emergency Price Check.

Side lights on the progress in various communities were reported in the Regional News Letter of March 25:

Saginaw first across the line.—Boards in the Saginaw, Mich., District were the first to complete the check, with all stores being surveyed by 5 p. m., Monday afternoon—the first day.

Four stores checked by plane.—The four food stores on Beaver Island in Lake Michigan are only reached regularly in winter by mail plane. But to hit 100 percent, those stores had to be checked. The answer? The Grand Rapids District Office swore in the pilot as a price-panel associate. The pilot flew to Beaver Island, checked the stores, flew back. Grand Rapids got its 100 percent.

Hard luck story.—One West Virginia store-checker trudged 12 miles on foot up a devious mountain road to check one store. When he got there, he found the store had burned to the ground 2 days before.

The total results showed a coverage of 99.9 percent: 6,870 volunteers "led and assisted" by 1,669 price clerks, specialists, and other paid employees, checked 58,791 out of a total of 58,862 food stores. Of the total stores checked, 19,961 were in full compliance, an increase of approximately 50 percent over the June survey results. Although the Region III compliance average was still below that of the country as a whole, the Cleveland office was justifiably proud of its accomplishments. In 8 months they had built their panel organization up to one of the most effective in the country.

"Don't Buy Another Depression"

Milwaukee, in Region VI, was one of the two cities in the country to make a 100 percent survey of grocery stores in May 1943. In the Emergency Price Check of 1944 Milwaukee added another "first" to its accomplishments. Not only did its residents make a complete check of their grocery stores but they accompanied it by a week of city-wide community education which excelled even Richmond's 1942 demonstration. Under the slogan, "Don't Buy Another Depression" the Governor of the State, the mayor of the city, public officials and civic

groups joined with OPA to call public attention to price control. The district director who in 1943 had helped persuade Prentiss Brown to embark on the price panel program now inspired his city to show the country what price control meant. The demonstration, recorded in newspapers and magazines, gave national publicity to the work of Milwaukee. One of the more sober articles described it as follows: [8]

> The program was opened with an inflation meal at which the prices on food rose so rapidly during the course of the dinner, that the guests were able to secure only a cup of coffee and a roll for the 10,000 phoney inflationary money bills that were distributed to all citizens.
>
> During the campaign the schools devoted special time as did some of the churches, to a discussion period on the fight against inflation. Employers distributed the phoney money bills with regular pay-roll checks, and stores and banks likewise aided in distributing anti-inflationary literature. Huge billboards and numerous placards emphasizing the slogan blanketed the city.
>
> Retailers carried special ads and used unique window displays to aid the campaign. The newspapers publicized it extensively and the local as well as national broadcasting stations contributed to the publicity. The campaign ended with an inflation parade in which huge, blown-up figures represented the blown-up prices that might result from uncontrolled inflation.

The practical results of the campaign were shown in the final reports on the Emergency Price Check. Milwaukee was established as first among the large cities of the country for observance of price ceilings.

Nationally, the reports of the emergency price check [9] showed that 5,108 boards of the country participated and that 434,812 food stores were visited, 3 times the number covered in any previous month. The national average for compliance with price controls was just under 50 percent. Region I, which in 1942 had the first functioning price panels in the country (Rhode Island), and the first complete surveys (Vermont), now led all the regions with a compliance average of 69 percent. Among districts, Sacramento, Calif., took the lead. Here, where the first price panel experiments had been made in the West, the district average for compliance was 75 percent.

A later comparison of the survey results, board by board, brought out even more convincing evidence of the effect of continued store checking. In areas where there were enough volunteers to make weekly visits the number of stores in violation dropped to 4 percent, and where there were no regular visits as many as 75 percent of the stores were found to be overcharging.[10]

Obviously in most of the country more volunteers and more surveys were needed. But enough successful survey work had been done to

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[8] Bruno Bitker, "The Fight Against Inflation," *Wisconsin Law Review,* March 1947, p. 209.

[9] Emergency Price Check Summary, March 1944, Information files.

[10] Press release, OPA 4330, May 25, 1944.

justify the price panel organization's pride in its share in the results reported in a letter Bowles wrote to the President the following month:

APRIL 7, 1944.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: On this first anniversary of the issuance of the hold-the-line order we can report that the task of stopping the rise in prices thus far has been carried out.

It is true, as everyone knows, that there have been increases in some items, clothing, for example, but these increases have been fully offset by decreases on the price of other items, notably foods. Indeed the cost of living as a whole is slightly lower than it was a year ago today. This record—1 year of stable living costs—is unprecedented either in this war or the last war . . .

The Compliance Goal

The results of the March survey received much publicity. Some grocers complained that they were being discriminated against, that no other trade was surveyed so frequently. OPA answered that 40 percent of the expenses of low-income families was for food, and no other trade affected the cost of living so keenly. However, the OPA proceeded to establish goals for surveys to ensure that other trades were not neglected. Grocery stores continued to head the list. Surveys aimed at specific shortages or to cover new regulations were to be sent out from the national office, and the regions were asked to supplement these sufficiently to make the following general coverage:

1. Visit every food seller at least once a month.
2. Visit every restaurant at least once in 2 months.
3. Visit every outlet of one major service trade (laundries, dry cleaners, auto repairs, electrical appliance repairs, or shoe repairs) at least once a month.
4. Visit every consumer durable goods dealer to check a chosen item at least once a month.

The immediate effect of setting these survey goals was to focus attention upon the crying need for volunteers, and more volunteers, to check the stores. Forty-one thousand volunteers in March had needed the help of all the paid staff at the boards to check 90 percent of the Nation's food stores. The new survey plan called for at least 125,000 price panel assistants. The field staff wondered whether they could be recruited.

Even without this need for an increase in volunteers, the district price staffs and the price clerks were continuously recruiting. After every big survey the volunteer corps tended to dwindle and another recruitment drive seemed necessary. Nearly every region and every district using price panel assistants reported the same dilemma. The loss was variously attributed to the unpleasant character of the work or to the instability of volunteers. A survey made in Washington

at this time indicated, however, that neither of these factors was a major element in the loss of volunteers.

The OWI Survey

In an attempt to analyze difficulties with volunteers, OPA requested the Office of War Information to make a study of price panel assistants[11] and their reactions to the price panel program. Between March 13 and 25, OWI interviewed 30 active and 29 inactive price panel assistants drawn at random from 8 of the 16 boards in Washington, D. C. They also interviewed 15 out of 16 of the city's price clerks, and 145 Washington retail grocers. "The interviews were full and lengthy."

The report brought out some very pertinent facts. First, both active and inactive price panel assistants were "strongly in favor of the OPA program"; 100 percent of the actives and 80 percent of the inactives believed in the value of the work. It was *not* disapproval which caused the volunteers to quit. Second, both active and inactive price panel assistants mentioned first among the things they did not like, "the feeling of snooping or policing," but only two people gave this as a reason for quitting. Apparently the idea of snooping was more of a deterrent in recruitment[12] than in retention of volunteers. Third, both actives and inactives reported that the grocers were polite to them and even "appreciative of their work." The interviews with 145 grocers bore out this feeling of the price panel assistants. Evidently it was not grocer hostility which caused the volunteer turn-over. Why, then, did so many of the active volunteers of 1 month fail to show up for work the following month?

OWI found that the greatest single difference between the active and inactive groups was in their ability to deal with people. Examination of the answers of the inactive group showed that 20 percent of them were never able to get over their timidity in approaching the merchants, and that they finally gave up on that account. Another 20 percent had definite and valid reasons for quitting, such as having taken full-time jobs or having lost the help that formerly took care of the children at home. Nearly another 10 percent cited physical limitations, such as inability to do the extensive walking required by price checking, or having a sick child. The loss of this 50 percent seemed unavoidable. The other 50 percent of the inactives had apparently just drifted away. Either the price clerk had not sent them

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[11] Memorandum No. 75, Price Panel Assistants, Bureau of Special Services, Office of War Information, April 27, 1944.

[12] The OCD consistently gave this as a reason for inability to supply volunteers for price programs. However, the *Pueblo, Colo., History* and the *Atlanta History* mention this as a reason for losing volunteers.

the survey assignments, or the price clerk had not made them feel their work was worth while, or the price clerk had not told them what happened to the violations, or had not given them sufficient training, or, in a change of price clerks, their names were mislaid.

Half the loss, therefore, must be attributed to failures on the part of the harassed, overworked, and underpaid price clerks. By the same token, the volunteer procedure proposed in 1942 now seemed to be vindicated. Certainly the evidence showed that volunteers needed administrative supervision, just as the paid staff did. It showed that large numbers of volunteers tended to drift away unless someone was directly responsible for their work and actively interested in the results. From this report the district price staff learned what it already knew: its price clerks were faced with an impossible workload and its volunteers needed more attention.

The Volunteer Specialist

In January 1944 the national office volunteer section became a part of Board Operations, and in February, Field Administrative Letter No. 23, the volunteer directive, was revised to read:

> The national, regional, and district board operations executives shall be responsible for securing, organizing, and administering volunteer participation in price, rationing, rent, information, administration, and enforcement activities. Volunteer specialists shall normally be appointed by the regional and district board operations executives to discharge the responsibilities specified in this chapter.

The job descriptions for volunteer specialists were cleared by Civil Service, and the directive began to take effect in the field just about the time the OWI survey showed a convincing need of it. Unfortunately, the job description failed to contain any requirement for, or reference to, experience in organization and management of volunteers, or experience gained in a volunteer capacity. This omission caused the Civil Service Commission to refuse to approve appointments of many well-qualified people whose previous experience had been wholly in "uncompensated" work. It also permitted the appointment of persons who had no volunteer experience, and who in some cases proved to be temperamentally unfit to handle volunteer problems. In spite of this, the new appointees were hailed with relief in the field. Between April and July 1944, 41 district volunteer specialists were appointed to be directly responsible for recruitment and basic training of volunteers. The Price Division planned additional surveys and requested additional volunteers.

The One-for-One Campaign

To achieve this purpose, the national office volunteer section launched the one-for-one campaign in May 1944 in an attempt to

double the number of price panel assistants in each board. The campaign was announced in the press and on the radio. In Bowles' weekly letter [13] to the board members he said:

> We're asking each one of you . . . to recruit one price panel assistant from May 29 through June 10.
>
> I don't think any of us realized the importance of these volunteers until our first food price survey.
>
> For example, in areas where there were enough volunteers to make weekly visits to neighborhood grocers 96 percent of the stores were complying with our regulations. Only 4 percent were in violation. But in areas where there were not enough volunteers as many as 75 percent of the stores showed one or more violations.

The Labor Advisory Committee Bulletin of May 22, 1944, carried the same message to unions over the country and added this significant table:

HERE IS THE RECORD FOR 4 TYPICAL COMMUNITIES—

When stores were visited:		*Percent*
Occasionally	The number of stores violating was	75
Monthly	The number of stores violating was	50
Every 2 weeks	The number of stores violating was	25
Weekly	The number of stores violating was	4

Penny overcharges add up to inflationary dollars and put the "pinch" on you and your families * * * especially service men's families and other income groups. And here's how it works out: If the average housewife pays out only 25 cents in overcharges on her *weekly* marketing trip, the annual cost to the families in a community of—

5,000 population would be about	$16,250
25,000 population would be about	81,250
100,000 population would be about	325,000
500,000 population would be about	1,625,000
1,000,000 population would be about	3,250,000

Accompanied by all this publicity the new volunteer specialists and board operations officers went into the plan wholeheartedly. Many districts reported it a great success. Yet, when the number of price panel assistants was totaled at the end of June, it amounted to only 46,481, an increase of 6,000 for the whole country. The board members and board staff had not responded with enthusiasm. It should be remembered that these were the same people who had been struggling with this problem for months. With the advent of the new specialists the board personnel had expected help, not another request for them to go out and recruit.

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[13] Weekly Board Letter, May 24, 1944.

Improved Methods

In many districts the specialists took the attitude that they were not supposed to recruit for the boards, but to devise methods of recruiting and to appoint volunteer supervisors at the boards to do the recruiting. This may have been wise, but it took time. Unless the volunteer specialist was familiar with the community, her surest method of getting a volunteer board supervisor was by asking the board members to suggest someone. At the beginning of the program this would have been not only the most logical but the most acceptable method; now it frequently resulted in the appointment of the same captain of volunteers who had been working all along, or the tired board member who had already given most help. It did not bring new blood into the volunteer ranks.

In one instance at least the district specialist enlisted the help of the very price clerk the plan was supposed to relieve. This price clerk herself began as a volunteer in the first June survey and continued as a captain of volunteers for some time after. When clerk jobs were difficult to fill, she was persuaded to take a full-time paid position. A grandmother with two college degrees she settled down to learn the duties of a price clerk but she continued to recruit volunteers with her left hand. When it seemed impossible to get volunteers for a large metropolitan board she was transferred to that spot and within a few weeks the number of volunteers had increased by 400 percent. No unwary stranger who came near was safe from her recruiting wiles. She signed them all up, the inquiring passerby, the complaining consumer, the retailers themselves and even, at one time, the policeman on the beat. After several futile attempts to find a supervisor for that board [14] the district specialist acknowledged the reality of the situation and designated the chief price clerk as the "volunteer" supervisor. In this capacity she recruited, successfully, both rationing and price volunteers.

In this particular case the choice was a wise one but the habit of designating the person already most involved in the program obviously did not tap new sources nor increase the number of volunteers. Good volunteer supervisors were difficult to find. Field Administrative Letter No. 23 listed the following among their necessary qualifications:

A. Ability to work with others.
B. Ability to organize and supervise the work of others.
C. Maintain personnel data records.
D. Act as liaison officer with the defense council . . . in the recruitment of all volunteers . . .

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[14] War Price and Rationing Board No. 10, Washington, D. C.

E. Arrange training classes for volunteers on the purpose of the Office of Price Administration and any necessary training in the specific tasks volunteers are to perform.

Generally speaking, people who had all of these qualifications were already involved in some type of war service by 1944. The specialist not only had to find them but persuade them to take on "one more thing." The volunteer supervisor was the crux of the organized program and the district specialist may be forgiven for snatching at one where she could. Even if the 41 new volunteer specialists did not immediately increase the number of volunteers, they did improve and strengthen the price panel program. Their help was more essential to the price program than to the rationing program for 2 reasons. In the first place, the rationing volunteers worked in the boards under the eye of the chief clerk, where mistakes could be caught and rectified immediately, while the price panel assistants worked away from the boards in the stores, without supervision, and accordingly needed more thorough premilinary training. Secondly, the number of paid rationing clerks almost equalled the number of rationing volunteers: it was not too difficult for 1 clerk to supervise the work of 1 or even 2 volunteers; it was a different story when, as in March 1944, 2,406 price clerks were expected to supervise 41,000 price panel assistants.

Under these circumstances the price program desperately needed a full-time person in each district to take responsibility for training and scheduling the price panel assistants. The volunteer specialist assumed these tasks. The price clerk, relieved of the major responsibility for training, and given additional clerk help in the big boards (in April and May 1944, the number of full-time price clerks was increased to 5,011)[15] now was able to process the returns from one survey before it was time to send out the next survey. Fewer volunteers could complain of not receiving regular assignments. Also, with a lighter load, the price clerks were able to keep better records of volunteer time and accomplishments. Fewer volunteers were lost in the shuffle and more of them were impressed with the value of their work. Even where the number of price panel assistants did not increase, the total number of volunteer hours increased, the volunteers were being utilized to better advantage and the turn-over was decreased.

In 1944 the price panel assistants became and remained the largest single group of volunteers in OPA, but there were never enough of them to carry out all the surveys needed for effective price control.

It is not surprising that busy price clerks directly responsible for a heavy load of clerical work were not always successful in training and inspiring groups of volunteers. It is in fact greatly to the credit

[15] T–802, Summary reports, May 1944, Board Management Files.

of price clerks, the volunteers, and the program itself, that only 25 percent of the volunteers "drifted away" each month. But had the volunteer specialists been appointed at the beginning of the price panel program, it seems fair to assume that many thousands of volunteers who went off to other war work would have been retained in Price.

In reviewing the program up to this time it seems obvious that Price was attempting an impossible physical task. It could not satisfactorily exercise both technical and administrative supervision with a force scarcely adequate for the technical aspects alone. The technical aspects went by default without price supervision, and the price staff could not handle the administrative aspects unaided. Lines of authority at first were confused and later were the subject of acute interdepartmental conflicts and jealousies at all levels. In spite of these serious handicaps the emergency price check and other surveys produced a convincing degree of success in price compliance. By the first of July 1944, three points about the volunteer price checking seemed to be fairly well established. First, with enough price panel assistants doing frequent and systematic checking, violations in transactions checked in grocery stores could be reduced to 4 percent. Second, the number of price panel assistants needed to do an adequate job for all retail outlets was far greater than the number then on the rolls. And third, if approximately 125,000 price panel assistants were to be recruited, trained, and held in the program, it would require a vastly increased permanent staff to keep "such a large organization moving intelligently."

CHAPTER 9

Shifts in Emphasis

In the latter part of 1944, after a year and a half of neighborly persuasion, two significant shifts in emphasis began to take place in the volunteer program. One of these took the form of a self-regulation of business with an accompanying exclusion of consumer or housewife participation. In each of its phases "self-regulation" seemed to represent a definite move away from the full community participation announced by Prentiss Brown and emphasized by Chester Bowles. The other shift at this time was a tightning of compliance through the procedure of the "Administrator's Claim," with a decreased emphasis on neighborly persuasion.

The St. Louis Plan

The first type of self-regulation of business was a local plan which recruited business employees on company time to make OPA surveys. Although carried out in several different cities, it seems to have been most successful in St. Louis and came to be known as the St. Louis Plan.

In May 1943, St. Louis had been the first city of the country to complete the first survey of grocery store community pricing. The price panel assistants for that survey were recruited through the consumer interest committee by the OPA information executive. Price panels were later established in St. Louis, but were not very effective in the early stages, and showed no interest in using the large group of women who, under the information executive, made the first two surveys.

After months of inaction both panels and price panel assistants were, according to the district director,[1] "practically nonexistent," so in January 1944 "a completely new approach to the problem was made." A new board chairman and new price panels were appointed,

[1] Memorandum, W. H. Bryan, District Director, to C. K. Dumars, Price Panel Section, Washington, D. C., November 27, 1944.

and John J. O'Fallon, formerly Chief of the War Block Service of OCD, headed up what became the St. Louis Men's Price Panel Assistants' organization. Mr. O'Fallon conceived the idea of asking business concerns to donate at least one man-day per month of their employees' time to work as price panel assistants. His first recruiting letter sent out over the names of two of the members of his advisory committee reveals his excellent grasp of public relations.[2]

JULY 20, 1944.

To St. Louis Retailers:

You believe in the self-regulation of business, don't you?

If so, here is your chance to help put business self-regulation into action—in St. Louis.

One of the Government requirements in the local OPA set-up is the creation of a "Price Panel Board." Under the direction of this board, groups of volunteers, known as "Price Panel Assistants," will contact merchants and others at the consumer level, to be sure that they understand how to post price ceiling lists and otherwise cooperate with the Government's plan for fighting inflation.

To do this work the local office needs the equivalent of 300 man-days per month. This means that retailing is asked to furnish 300 men to devote 1 day per month to this work. Because the 2 organizations signing this letter are convinced that business should do its own educational job, we are issuing this plea for manpower.

This job must be done by the local OPA. If business does not provide these voluntary workers, then they will be forced to recruit them from any available source.

We have done a lot of talking about the ability of business to regulate itself. Here is a chance to demonstrate that it can and will be done.

The work is not difficult. It consists of making fact-finding surveys and informing merchants about the posting of ceiling prices. The men allotted should be representative of business and possess the natural ability to make a friendly survey—in a businessman's way.

We urge you to return the attached card showing your willingness to cooperate.

Let's handle this businessman's problem in a businessman's way.

Cordially yours,

ASSOCIATED RETAILERS OF ST. LOUIS.
BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU OF ST. LOUIS.

The goal, 300 man days per month, had been attained by November 1944, 4 months later, when the District Price Liaison Office wrote to the national OPA:

We ca ndepend on employees of business firms, i. e., bookkeepers, salesmen, etc., to regularly work about 200 man-days per month.

From motion-picture operators, and other civic or union groups, we can rely on about 175 more man-days per month.

Because these men attend training meetings we are making better surveys.

And because of better surveys, compliance and relations with retailers are improving.[3]

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[2] Exhibit 6, St. Louis Price Panel Assistant Organization Booklet, Volunteer files.
[3] St. Louis Plan, Volunteer files.

While much of the success of the plan must be attributed to Mr. O'Fallon's personality and leadership, the methods which he evolved would have gone a long way toward producing success with any group of price panel assistants. As far as these methods can be analyzed from the "St. Louis Book"[4] they would apply equally well to any volunteer organization and are worthy of study in that light:

1. The St. Louis men's organization was given a dignified entity of its own. It was not merely an appendage to, nor a tool of, the price panels.
2. It had a director of its own whose time and interest were centered in its success.
3. The director had wide public-relations experience in organization work. He at once organized a staff adequate to service the plan at each stage of its action. He appointed:

(*a*) deputies as continuing liaison officers with various organizations, and

(*b*) supervisors and deputy supervisors to preside at all meetings of price panel assistants, to know the assistants personally, and to work in liaison with the price panel chairman.

4. Recruiting was done through organizations, business firms. This avoided time-consuming individual solicitation, and it gave an organizational responsibility to the volunteer.
5. The work was clearly defined: "informing merchants and making fact-finding surveys."
6. Definite training was given for each survey and definite dates were assigned for the training (two alternate days in each month).
7. Turn-over and absences were discussed in advance and recruiting was continuous.
8. Information on the results of their past work was given to the assistants at the monthly training meetings and through a monthly bulletin.
9. The job was dignified through press and radio as a partiotic war service until it challenged the position of the panels themselves.

One can only wish that the price panel assistants in general had been given such an organization, such direction, and such support.

In analyzing the effectiveness of the St. Louis plan it should be remembered that its originator had been chief of the War Block Service of OCD. He knew how to handle volunteers. One suspects that it was not essential to his success that the price panel assistants were all men working on time paid for by the business concerns. This device was merely an added evidence of his resourcefulness. But it is the part of his plan which was most open to question. Although the St. Louis plan seems to have worked well at this time and place, when extension of the plan was later being considered the national office wondered whether it was wise to have all the checking done by men in a field where 85 percent of the customers were women.[5] It seemed

[4] Volunteer Records, Information files.

[5] Memorandum, Alfred Stanford to James Rogers, April 12, 1945, Information files.

possible that with the best of intentions the business-employee men checkers might be unsympathetic to, or unaware of, the customer's point of view.

The Grocer-Consumer Anti-inflation Campaign

The second and much wider effort toward self-regulation of business, although indicating a welcome interest in the trade, precipitated one of the bitterest fights within the agency over the issue of consumer participation. This campaign was announced as a grocer-consumer campaign, but the only tools by which the consumers could easily cooperate, the individual community price lists, were eliminated before the campaign began. In return the grocers' associations promised a campaign to improve posting compliance in the grocery stores of the country. Something new had been added, and something taken away. Three groups of volunteers within OPA, the Consumer Advisory Committee, the Labor Advisory Committee, and the community service members at the local boards fought bitterly against the elimination of the consumer price lists. A schism appeared in the agency's information staff that reflected divergent viewpoints in the food division over reliance on trade associations.

By the terms of the regulation grocery stores were required to display posters for all items which were under dollars-and-cents ceilings. OPA supplied these posters, the most important of which were the meat posters and the community price list of dry groceries which changed every 3 months. Grocery surveys showed that all too frequently the posters were not "displayed" at all, or were put where it was impossible for customers to read them without a spyglass. After the Homefront Pledge the Information Department began printing miniature posters, or pocket-size price lists, to enable customers to keep that pledge. These were used by the community service members at the local boards as their follow-up campaign on the pledge.

The first consumer price lists were sent to the regions in March 1944. Only 2,500,000 of the grocery lists were printed for this test period and no promotional publicity accompanied them. Seven out of the eight regions reported back that community service members and civic organizations quickly distributed the "limited number allotted to us."[6] Region IV wrote: "Proof of the public use of the lists may be noted in almost any store, as women [take] lists from their purses and scrutinize prices before paying the bill." But Region VII reported that its offices gave out the lists only on request, as the Regional Price Executive thought grocers would resent "this advertising of the

[6] Memorandum, Tom Donnelly to Chester Bowles, "Résume of Field Experiences with Last Quarter's Consumer Community Program", April 11, 1944.

different prices in different group stores." Evidently there were other objections of the same kind, because on April 10 the Consumer Advisory Committee wrote to Bowles:

> We understand that you are under pressure to modify the program of printing and distributing community price lists. We want to insist with all possible force that you continue and extend this program. Community ceilings are the only prices which the public can enforce. To drop a plan for putting these ceiling prices into the hands of consumers would be tantamount to denying the principle of public participation in the enforcement of price control.

On April 18 he reassured them and made his position clear to the field staff:

> We have had some conversations in the last 2 weeks with representatives of both large and small food retailers with respect to the information on prices for the four classes of stores. Some of them have argued with us that we should not put out price lists for stores in Groups III and IV.
>
> My position on this is very clear. Our policy is that, whenever we have dollar-and-cents ceiling prices which can be easily recognized by the consumer, we will make those prices available to the public.

A few days later the Deputy Administrator for Information wrote to the information executives that the violations found on the March survey emphasized the need for getting price lists into the hands of the buying public, and further, that distribution of the lists was to be a project "for putting both our new and our revitalized community service members to immediate and effective use."[7] He added that within a week the field would receive national office instructions on distribution of the June price lists and that a national campaign would be launched from Washington to educate the public in the use and availability of the lists.

The June meat and grocery lists were sent to the regions as promised, 10,000,000 of each, but for reasons not explained to the field, no distribution instructions were sent to the information executives and no publicity was launched at the national office. In regions and districts where the information executives had initiative and determination, the consumer price lists were distributed, as in March, by the community service volunteers and through such organizations as the OCD, the Parent-Teachers associations, and the League of Women Voters. In St. Louis where the information executive worked closely with the OCD Information Center, the lists were quickly distributed through the center's 40 organizations. Almost immediately the Men's Price Panel Assistant Organization announced they would not check prices if women were also checking, and they were scarcely mollified when the consumer member on the Advisory Board told them these

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[7] Memorandum, Tom Donnelly, to all regional information executives, "Distribution Program for Consumer Price Lists," April 22, 1944.

were only the housewives doing their daily marketing.[8] The general regional response to the lists was favorable, but in districts where the information executive was not in sympathy with consumer participation, or was indifferent, the lists gathered dust in the corners. Lack of a national publicity campaign meant that the general public was unaware of the lists and few people asked for them at the boards.

On July 3, Bowles was informed that no instructions had been sent and no publicity released because of an agreement with the grocers' associations that the consumer price lists would not be "actively promoted," but merely made "available."[9] The staff memo reported an agreement reached on information policy which obligated OPA to drop the consumer lists entirely for the next pricing period, in return for the trade's guarantee of an all-out campaign for visible, multiple posting of ceiling price lists in retail stores. The basic problem was seen as "one of getting grocers and customers together in a frank friendly effort to make price control week . . . [the grocers had] never fully grasped the possibilities of merchandising their honesty."

The Consumer Advisory Committee remonstrated:

> Our committee was informed on July 18 by Mr. Bennet of the Information Department that the plan for the wide distribution of consumer price lists had been abandoned and a retailer's advertising campaign for "multiple, visible" posting had been substituted, with a definite commitment given the retailers that consumer price lists would not be promoted.
>
> If the independent retailers only objected to the comparative prices on the consumer lists, why were they not asked to show their good faith by promoting the distribution to consumers of the *separate* price lists . . . If, as the associations say, visible price posting is going to mean compliance, can there be any objection on the retailer's part to give his customer a list to take home, where she can study his prices at leisure and learn to carry out her part in maintaining price control? . . .
>
> If the object is to bring the retailer and consumer closer together, what could be more effective then to have the retailer himself give price lists to his customers . . . Unless the retail associations are trying to protect their violating members, they should not object to making this distribution part of their goodwill campaign.

With this background, and accompanied by continuing field requests for consumer lists,[10] the anti-inflation campaign got under way. Detailed instructions were sent to every regional and district information executive. This was a "must" program. By October, the grocer committees were formed in every city and an intensive newspaper and radio campaign was in full swing. Kits of display materials were

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[8] Report on consumer price lists, Mrs. Marion Weir, Consumer Member, St. Louis Price Panel Organization, St. Louis, Mo.

[9] Memorandum, Douglass Bennett to Chester Bowles, "Food Price Lists," July 3, 1944.

[10] Memoranda, Jack O'Brien, Chief of Field Information, to Alfred Stanford, Deputy Administrator, and to Esther Cole Franklin, Consumer Relations Adviser, Information files.

furnished free to grocers upon request. The plan provided that every store should be festooned with banners bearing the slogan "Grocer-Consumer Anti-inflation Campaign." The symbol showed a grocer and a housewife shaking hands, and one of the most popular posters carried under this picture the Words: "Let's team up . . . to keep food prices down . . . for the sake of America's future." Elaborate and effective window displays were suggested by Washington, and in some districts prizes of war bonds were offered by the grocers' associations to the school or club suggesting the best slogan. The campaign was launched in most districts by a large meeting to which grocers and board personnel were invited. Generally some prominent consumer was invited to speak.

The national information office included in the instructions a sample shopping list, without ceiling prices, but with a column in which the shopper could insert the ceiling prices after she looked them up on the grocer's poster. At the same time she was invited to report on the presence and visibility of the posters in that particular store and send her report to the local board. This part of the plan met with a cool reception from the grocers. Their committee said with frankness and some justice, that no such scheme was included in the bargain; they did not want to do anything to encourage housewives snooping around their stores. The proposed check list was used in very few districts and is not recorded as a success in those.

The grocers' associations carried out their part of the bargain handsomely. Enthusiastic reports [11] were sent into the national office on the cooperation of the local grocers, the excellent window displays, the amount of favorable publicity, and the number of radio spot announcements donated. According to OWI this was one of the most impressive campaigns the trade had ever staged, "second only to the war bond drive." Posting compliance increased noticeably, but price compliance is seldom mentioned in the field reports.

A national office report [12] made later sums up the situation. Discussing the posting result, it says:

> These figures show marked improvement from June to December. 91.5 percent of the stores checked in December were in compliance as compared with 81.5 percent in June.

The price picture was not so encouraging.

> Stretching the campaign to its utmost period, September–December, a drop in violations of only 0.7 of 1 percent is observed in Class I and II stores. *In the*

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[11] Field Reports, Grocer-Consumer Anti-inflation Campaign, October–December 1944, Volunteer files.

[12] Memorandum, Alfred Stanford, Deputy Administrator for Information, to James G. Rogers, Senior Deputy Administrator, January 30, 1945.

preceding 4 months the drop was 0.5 of 1 percent. In other words, this campaign decreased violations by only a miniscule amount and hardly affected the already established downward trend at all. This is a failure.

In Class III and IV stores a decrease of 3.2 percent in violations occurred during the campaign. This is at least a noticeable amount. In the preceding 4 months the trend had been almost stationary—only 0.8 of 1 percent difference. This is a mildly good result.

The community service members are not mentioned in reports of the Grocer-Consumer Anti-inflation Campaign, but the volunteer records show that their number dropped from 8,879 in June (the last date of the consumer lists) to 3,541 in October 1945.[13] The community service members who remained with OPA continued to request the consumer price lists in each monthly report.[14]

The national office was not unified[15] in its opinion but the final decision was to continue the campaign, *minus the consumer lists*, for another 6 months. In January the Consumer Advisory Committee again registered its protest:

> Since the primary objective of OPA is to keep prices in line rather than to decorate store interiors with posters of various kinds, the ultimate aim of any major OPA campaign must be increased price compliance.
>
> Ceiling prices for independent and chain stores can be printed on separate lists—meat and grocery prices for each group being printed on opposite sides of the same sheet. This would answer the only stated objection of the industry to the use of these lists—the "comparative price advertising" of the two store groups on one sheet of paper.
>
> Our knowledge of the housewife's problems and psychology convinces us that most shoppers are not going to make out a shopping list and check its ceiling prices in the store.
>
> *a.* Because the shopping trip is usually a hurried affair and finding the items on the price ceiling lists, if they can be found there at all, puts an additional time burden on the schedule of the wartime housewife.
>
> *b.* Because of the fear of incurring the ill-will of a storekeeper upon whom the consumer may be more or less dependent for supplies by reason of location or credit arrangements or long-range association.
>
> At the risk of seeming repetitions, may we point out again that the only practical way, under wartime conditions of time problems, scarcities, and discrimination on the part of sellers, to arm the consumer with her weapon against inflation, is to give her *a price ceiling list of her own* which she can study at leisure and use in her own way in her fight against black markets.[16]

The February OWI Survey on "Women and Prices" was designed to show the effect of the Grocer-Consumer Campaign on the consumer. Two-thirds of the women interviewed remembered they

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[13] Figures taken from the Volunteer Quarterly Reports, Volunteer files.

[14] See monthly reports Field Operations, Information files.

[15] Memorandum, Alfred Stanford, Deputy Administrator for Information, "Consumer Price Lists", Information files.

[16] Memorandum, Consumer Advisory Committee to Chester Bowles, "Reinstitution of Consumer Price Lists," January 24, 1945.

had heard "something" in the last few months about consumers helping to keep prices down, but less than one-half of 1 percent recalled the suggestion that consumers team up and cooperate with their grocers; the same percent recalled the suggestion that they check to see that ceiling price lists were posted. Two-thirds of 1 percent remembered being told to ask their grocers about prices that seemed to be above ceilings. The Grocer-Consumer Campaign was staged without the help of consumers and the consumers responded, as in the days of GMPR, by ignoring the campaign. It should be borne in mind that this period from the spring through the fall of 1944 was also the period of the "bare-shelf" policy in food rationing, when the authorities in OPA and the War Food Administration, optimistic over an early end to the war, and apprehensive about surplus inventories, removed most foods from rationing.

The survey also reported that 79 percent of the women of the country were in favor of price control, but only 7 percent had ever reported a violation. The most significant finding, according to OWI, was that almost 20 percent of the women reported they were afraid to question prices with the grocer, afraid of a scene or afraid of losing their source of supply. Another 17 percent thought complaints were ineffective anyway. Apparently the grocers and consumers had not teamed up. In the meantime general consumer participation in OPA's program had almost reached the vanishing point. Consumers were generally "in favor" of price control but they had lost touch with it and no longer felt they had a part in it.

Eventually the rise of food prices in the Bureau of Labor Statistics index, plus staff protests,[17] prevailed over the mid-1944 information policy, and in the summer of 1945, at the height of the meat shortage, meat lists (but not grocery lists) were again distributed, without national publicity, in an effort to curb the black market.

The Grocer-Consumer Anti-inflation Campaign was continued somewhat sporadically all through 1945 with only slight variations in method and results.[18]

The Administrator's Claim

The legislation extending price controls in 1944 substantially altered the legal sanctions available to OPA in consumer complaint cases. Under the original act a consumer was given the right to sue a retailer for three times the amount of an overcharge or $50, whichever was greater, regardless of whether or not the violation was intentional.

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[17] See folder, "Memoranda on Consumer Miniature Price Lists", Information Department files.

[18] See Regional OPA histories for field results, *OPA Bibliography, 1940–47.*

OPA, which had the sole right of suit for violations in transactions within the trade, could not sue on a retail violation. In testimony on the 1944 extension bill, Bowles urged an amendment to "make the compliance activities of the volunteer price panels much more effective." As enacted the amendment provided that in case the consumer did not bring suit within 30 days, the Administrator could assert the claim for damages; and the consumer was otherwise thereafter barred. At the same time the defense of "good faith" was admitted in mitigation of damages. Under the previous arrangement few consumers went to court and the great majority of overcharges went unrefunded. Now the Administrator's Claim was subject to negotiation for settlement and in August Bowles delegated his negotiatory powers to the volunteer price panels. The panels could hear the parties, charge the retailer with a violation, and recommend to the district director a basis for settling the case out of court. Settlements were a matter of public record. In practice the panels, when violations were discovered in the course of routine price checks by price panel assistants, could bring the Administrator's Claim without depending on consumer complaints.

All price violations were to be settled by a refund to the United States Treasury, or to known customers, or both. For unintentional violations the retailer might be allowed to settle his case for $25, or the overcharge, whichever was greater. For intentional or repeated overcharges, the settlement might be three times the overcharges or $50, whichever was greater. If the overcharged customers could be identified, the amount of overcharge was returned to them; otherwise it went to the Treasury. In no case could the refund to the customer be in excess of the amount by which he was overcharged. Only by suing for himself could the customer get treble damages.

It was the panel's function to decide whether the violation was intentional or unintentional, and to recommend a settlement on that basis. The district director had to accept or reject the panel's recommendation before the case was closed. The retailer's part in the negotiation was voluntary throughout, but under the new act his alternative, in case of a known violation, was to face court action by the district office. This gave the panels a more powerful tool of persuasion. It was a shift in the emphasis of neighborly persuasion, but it was still a settlement made on a democratic basis with members of the local community rather than with outside Government agents.

All possible precautions were taken to ensure that the panels would use their new power fairly in the interest of both buyers and sellers, and that the application of the law would be uniform throughout the country. Detailed instructions on negotiating the Administrator's Claim were included in the loose-leaf service at the local boards and

printed separately in the price panel manual for each board member to study. The Enforcement Division took renewed interest in the program and in many places did much of the training. An Enforcement coordinator was personally responsible for the review of each case before the panel recommendation was accepted or returned to the board for further action.

Price Panel Reactions

In spite of these precautions price panel reactions to the new authority were not entirely favorable. Those which had been operating effectively for a year, welcomed the new procedure. They had experienced the futility of sending to the district office the perpetrators of small but continued violations. They realized that the size of the Enforcement staffs prevented prosecution or even investigation of the majority of these small cases. They knew that these violators had come to look upon "referral" as immunity rather than the prelude to legal action. These panels had exhausted their persuasiveness upon the persistent violator and recognized the need for something more than a compliance conference. In this category there were instances of zealous boards disregarding procedural safeguards and in effect levying fines, which led to talk in Congress of "kangaroo courts."

New price panels on the other hand, those established only four or five months prior to the act, resented this change in emphasis. Even though price control had been in effect two years, during which any retailer should have learned the regulations as applied to his business, these new panel members felt they had not yet had time to educate their communities. Until they, too, had faced the same violator three or four times they did not believe in his existence and the need for stronger action. Several regions reported a substantial number of resignations. On district[19] alone reported that 200 members had resigned. It took time and patient training to rebuild these panels and lead them to an effective use of the new sanction.

Still another group of price panel members balked altogether at asserting the Administrator's Claim. This was the industry-minded or industry-dominated panel. Instructions for appointing price panels definitely forbade a member of any trade to act on the panel which handled compliance for that trade. Instructions also stated that the membership should be representative of the community as a whole. Both of these directives were sometimes disregarded, and in certain cases the result was a panel which refused to "crack down" on the violator under any circumstances.

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[19] T. E. Fairchild, History of Price Control in Milwaukee, item 10K.52 in *OPA Bibliography, 1940–47.*

This should not be construed as an indication that businessmen on the panels were not in sympathy with the Administrator's Claim sanction. Quite the contrary. The majority of panel members at all times were businessmen and the great majority of them believed firmly in the need for price control. They also believed that the honest retailer should be protected against the chiseller and, once convinced that a violation was intentional, they were likely to be the sternest members of the panel. But undeniably some price chairmen and some panels were more concerned with their post-price-control popularity in the trade than with their obligations as panel members. Occasionally such panels resigned and occasionally they were asked to resign. More frequently the members were reassigned to other more representative panels, or a leavening of new members was added to the original group. This too, took time and careful attention from the board operations officers who were now responsible for panel appointments. Where the board executives were not alert or not in sympathy with the price program, it was possible for an obstructing price chairman to prevent decisive action for many months.

Even the first group mentioned, those who saw the need for and welcomed the new authority given them, were frequently hesitant to use it. The first instructions sent out from the national office were anything but clear and, for a time at least, the legal interpretations of the Enforcement staff were not in agreement with the written instructions of the loose-leaf service. In addition, the various forms were complicated, and for some time the price clerks received no official instructions on them.

For all of these reasons most district offices were slow to urge the panels to use their new negotiatory power. The national results at the end of 6 months were negligible.

The Hearing Panel, Washington, D. C.

To remedy this situation and to ensure thorough training, many districts set up hearing panels, or superpanels, to act for several counties or for a whole city. To these hearing panels the individual panels referred cases that seemed to warrant the negotiation of the Administrator's Claim. In the District of Columbia the hearing panel met at the district office. It was made up of five outstandingly successful members of different board panels. Each meeting was also attended by the price chairmen of the local panels who had referred the cases to be heard. This method served the dual purpose of having on hand a panel member familiar with the past history of the case and of educating the rotating members one by one in the intricacies of taking Administrator's Claims. For the first 5 months after July 1944 only the hearing panel was allowed to take an Administrator's Claim in

Washington, D. C. Meetings of the hearing panel were attended by the District Price Executive and the Price Panel Coordinator. The District Price Attorney and Commodity Specialists could be called at a moment's notice. The District Information Officer presided over the press table and the newspapers were always well represented. The last meeting of this hearing panel was held in February 1945. The local panels, by then, were all taking Administrator's Claims, and it was felt that the training panel had served its purpose.

Results

From the beginning of 1945 the national number of Administrator's Claims increased rapidly. As is shown in the following table, before the end of the program millions of dollars of over-ceiling charges were being returned either to overcharged customers or to the United States Treasury.

Price panel activity—1945–46 [1]

	Jan.–June 1945	July–Dec. 1945	Jan.–June 1946	Total
Number of reported violations	521, 877	426, 535	426, 968	1, 375, 380
Number of conferences	239, 289	184, 085	200, 129	623, 503
Number consumers receiving refunds	29, 960	18, 521	8, 742	57, 223
Amount of money refunded	$943, 465	$671, 708	$511, 072	$2, 126, 245
Administrator's claims:				
Overcharges	$962, 302	$1, 088, 213	$1, 048, 176	$3, 098, 691
Number of settlements	18, 453	18, 763	33, 834	71, 050
Amount to Treasury	$1, 444, 249	$1, 610, 293	$2, 078, 116	$5, 132, 658
Refunds to customers	$107, 393	$98, 148	$185, 806	$391, 347
Number receiving refunds	4, 339	6, 211	7, 583	18, 133

A total of 71,050 sellers paid $5,132,658 to the United States Treasury as a result of overcharges totaling $3,098,691.

Out of 1,375,380 reported cases of violation for . . . [these] 18 months, conferences were held on 623,503 cases. These conferences resulted in 75,356 consumers receiving total refunds of $2,517,592.

[1] Price Board management, Statistical Reports, July 1946.

Almost 50 percent of all reported violations resulted in conferences but only 12 percent of the conferences resulted in settlements of the Administrator's Claim. The panels could scarcely be accused of abusing their authority or of exploiting the retailers. However, as a Regional Executive in Cleveland noted, this was a sufficient deterrent to prevent violations from becoming popular and was probably more effective than stricter measures imposed on the community from outside.

After 3 years of price control the educational phase of the price panel work took second place. Few men called to conference after that date were ignorant of their obligations. When new amendments went into effect the panels again held educational trade meetings and educational conferences. If a first offender was called in, they again used neighborly persuasion, but most of their time for the last year and a half of price control was spent in negotiating settlement for the Administrator's Claim against over-ceiling charges.

CHAPTER 10

The Organized Volunteer Program

No real appraisal can be made of the "procedure", the administrative supervision manual of the volunteer program, before 1945, when national directives had cleared the way for its use and a staff had been assigned to carry it out. Up to this time OPA had been using and losing volunteers without any clearly defined methods for their recruitment and supervision.

The techniques of price control and rationing were new to the United States in the years 1942–46. The techniques of local volunteer administration of a Federal law were also new. But the techniques of recruiting, training, and using volunteers had been used long and successfully in the United States. The achievements of the Red Cross, the neighborhood settlements, and the Parent-Teachers Association, to mention only a few, have been built upon the continued successful use of part-time volunteers. A knowledge of these methods was easily available to OPA from the beginning, but the need for them was obscured by OPA's relationship with the local defense councils and the Office of Civilian Defense.

Review

As has been noted, the local councils of defense staffed the early rationing boards. In general these councils felt a responsibility for, and continued to supply whatever volunteers were needed for the rationing boards. The work there was obviously urgent and people were eager to help in those first days after entrance into the war. Recruitment was no serious problem. Since, after the first few months, the clerical volunteers seldom exceeded the paid clerks in number and never averaged more than six to a board, their supervision likewise presented only sporadic and occasional problems. Peak load volunteers, to be sure, far outnumbered the clerks, but these were from already organized groups, school teachers, and parent-teacher groups who, *under their own supervisors* and outside of the boards, got out

the Ration Books or handled registrations. Original arrangements for peak load volunteers were made nationally. They presented no problem of recruitment and they worked under their own supervisors.

OPA's need for its own recruitment facilities seemed extremely remote when, on April 15, 1942, the Office of Civilian Defense was specifically directed to assist other Federal agencies by making available to them the services of the civilian population.[1] In line with this directive the OCD set up volunteer standards of work and established national awards for service performed. Theoretically, from then on, when OPA needed volunteers, the national office had merely to notify the national OCD, which in turn notified the local councils of the specific types and number needed. For the first year thereafter and in most places this proved to be generally effective.

However, even in the early months of rationing, the large city boards felt the need for more volunteers than OCD could furnish and for more supervision than OPA could give. One large board in New York City, unable to fill its needs through OCD, made arrangements with the Red Cross for a volunteer staff with its own supervisor. When Region II attempted to recruit 50,000 volunteers for the cost-of-living posting survey, its only real failure to obtain volunteers accurred in New York City through the OCD. There OCD and the American Women's Voluntary Services declined to recruit for the same program although neither was able by itself to furnish a sufficient number.[2] In November 1942 the San Francisco OPA experienced the same difficulty in getting enough volunteers for its boards. There the district director diagnosed the primary trouble as lack of adequate supervision, and installed the first district volunteer supervisor.

Meanwhile, in the summer of 1942 the national OPA was discussing plans for a greatly expanded use of volunteers in the price program at the local boards. The volunteer section made a study of the use of volunteers in OPA up to that date (September 1942), and on the basis of the findings wrote a "volunteer procedure." Prepared by Dorothy Fredenhagen, this manual used the accepted techniques for training and supervision of volunteers and adapted them to the OPA structure of national, regional, district, and local board operation. It was careful to establish a direct line of authority and responsibility from the national office to the local boards. It was careful also to provide for supervision of the volunteers by a volunteer at the local boards, but it placed responsibility for providing that volunteer supervisor upon a paid employee, called a volunteer specialist, at the dis-

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[1] The Office of Civilian Defense had been established May 20, 1941, by Executive Order No. 8757; this clarification of its function was made in Executive Order No. 9134.

[2] John Sly, "Report on Volunteer Work in Region II", Chicago Price Executives' Conference, June 1942.

trict level. General administrative responsibility was placed in the office of local board operations, the office already administratively responsible for the local boards. Technical responsibility for the use to be made of volunteer assistance was placed with the office responsible for the specific program to which the volunteers were to be assigned. Relationships with the Office for Civilian Defense were carefully defined. Qualifications for and duties of the volunteer assistance supervisor were set forth in particular detail. The methods of recruitment and training outlined were acceptable to OCD. Maintenance of a volunteer roster and records were specifically designed to conform with OPA needs for information and OCD requirements for acceptance into the United States Citizens Services Corps.

Two things militated against the adoption of the procedure at this time. First, most of the top executives considering this problem were unfamiliar with the techniques of handling volunteers. They saw no reason for administrative supervision of volunteers other than that given to all employees. They felt that the administrative problem really belonged to the Personnel Division and that all recruitment should be referred back to OCD. In line with this thinking, on November 27, 1942, the Volunteer Section was transferred to the Personnel Division and its chief was made Liaison Officer with OCD. The second obstacle to acceptance of the procedure in the fall of 1942 was the still unresolved conflict between the Legal and Price Divisions for technical supervision of the volunteers. Until this major issue was settled it appeared unlikely that the national office would allow any volunteer procedure to go to the field.

In the interim, as has been noted, the volunteer supervisor in San Francisco, was demonstrating the effectiveness of a specialist who could talk with the volunteers in their own language and whose main responsibility was for the volunteer phase of the program. "With better working conditions, a definite schedule and adequate training, the individual hours increased from an average of 5 hours a month to 35."[3] Region VIII adopted the proposed procedure on its own initiative.

When the volunteer participation in community pricing was announced in the spring of 1943, it was under the technical supervision of the Price Division. The Volunteer Procedure, several times revised, was sent to the boards on May 3 as Local Board Administrative Letter No. 23. The accompanying memorandum to regional administrators and district directors said that "volunteers are important to the success of OPA's program. The efficient utilization of volunteer workers cannot be underestimated either in terms of community acceptance

[3] Fredenhagen, *History of Volunteers,* ch. IV.

of OPA's program or in terms of the services they render in OPA's operations on a limited budget." But it will be recalled that neither the memorandum nor the local board letter placed responsibility for getting the volunteers upon any specific division or person at the district or regional level. In general terms it was content to say that "requests for volunteers should be submitted by the board chairman to the local defense council," and that the "board chairman shall appoint a volunteer assistance supervisor." By the end of June 1943, therefore, in spite of 2 additional staff memoranda from the Administrator himself, only half the boards of the country had recruited price panel assistants. A year later, in July 1944, only 1,112 out of 5,500 boards were yet reported as having volunteer assistance supervisors. Clearly, most of the price panel assistants who were recruited were not being supervised according to the directive.

In line with OCD standards, in February 1944 a reorganization occurred which, with an accompanying change in Letter No. 23, brought the idea of an organized volunteer program a long step nearer to fruition. Discouraging experience with previous arrangements persuaded the national office that volunteer specialists should be tried in the administration of the program. The Volunteer Section was again put into board operations and administrative responsibility for the volunteer program was given to volunteer specialists at the district and regional levels. Failure to require volunteer experience as a prerequisite for the job of volunteer specialist resulted in some inept appointments, but almost anyone willing to take responsibility was an aid to the overworked Price Division at this point. In spite of the appalling turn-over of volunteers in the price panel assistant corps, now the largest volunteer group in the program, district directors were slow to appoint the specialists. By July 1944, only 41 district and only 4 regional volunteer specialists had been appointed. In spite of continual urging by the national office, the field administrators still reflected considerable indifference, or inertia, or positive disbelief in the volunteer program, and by 1945 only 5 regional specialists (out of a possible 8), 70 district volunteer specialists (out of a possible 93), and 2,271 volunteer board supervisors (out of a possible 5,600) had been appointed. Only in certain areas could the "organized volunteer program" be said to be in effect.

Relationships With OCD

OPA field relationships with the Office of Civilian Defense deteriorated steadily between 1942 and 1945. Before appraising the 1945 accomplishments of the volunteer specialists, therefore, it is necessary to bear in mind the interagency difficulties and the resulting recruitment problems which the specialists inherited.

In the first place, OCD had only an advisory relationship with its 900 councils of defense. Any OPA program approved by the national OCD could be certain of an approving memorandum to, but not of acceptance by, the local councils. In addition, the President's directive gave the OCD the right of "approval" of volunteer programs. Not only the national, but also the State offices of OCD sometimes failed to approve the use of volunteers for price work, and accordingly refused to request the local councils to supply them. For various reasons the local councils themselves at times refused to supply volunteers even when approval had come from above. Whenever this occurred and a determined Price Division thereupon turned to some other source, complaints were passed back along to the national offices; and the tie between the two organizations was weakened.

OPA shortcomings in supervision of volunteers gave OCD considerable cause for complaint. The failure of board clerks (both rationing and price) to keep adequate volunteer records during the first 2 years was a constant irritation to OCD. According to the agreement between the agencies, all volunteers from whatever source were to be registered with OCD, their hours of service were to be reported to OCD, and at the apropriate time, the volunteer was to be accepted into the United States Service Corps. These instructions frequently failed to filter through to the boards, and even where they did, many clerks were too engulfed in the daily public demands to remember the reports owed to another agency. To OCD this was the last straw reflecting the inadequacy of an agency which supervised its volunteers so poorly that approximately 25 percent of them were lost in any given month. The file of correspondence [4] between OPA and OCD bears witness to numerous other difficulties which were eventually ironed out at the national level, but which added to the problems of recruitment at the local level.

Taken as a whole OCD was an indispensable source and facility in furnishing thousands and thousands of volunteers for the OPA programs, especially in the early period; but in some sections they furnished none, in others they furnished only clerical workers, and by 1944 the OPA demand was so great that OCD seemed unable to fill all the requests in any section. Under these circumstances OPA district offices turned haphazardly to other sources, to the Red Cross, the American Women's Voluntary Services, and other women's organizations, or to the churches for additional volunteers. OPA needed a recruitment policy of its own.

The revised letter No. 23 came out in February 1944, not only establishing the position of volunteer specialist, but also modifying

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[4] OCD correspondence, Volunteer files.

the requirement that volunteers should be recruited through OCD. A part of the new agreement read:

> If it is decided [after consultation] that the local volunteer office [OCD] cannot secure the necessary number and types of volunteers, the volunteer assistance supervisors shall be requested to recruit from other sources.

Accomplishments

The goal of the organized program was to recruit and train, for the use of the operating divisions of OPA, the requisite number and type of volunteers.

This goal as it related to the clerical volunteers was comparatively modest in its aims (there were between 30 and 40 thousand clericals throughout the rationing program), and in many cities the primary supervision was given by the OCD itself. In these places an OCD volunteer supervisor was assigned to the district or central office and all requests for clerical help were channelled through her. She also received from the chief clerks the reports of volunteer attendance and forwarded them to the OCD office. In smaller towns and areas where OCD was not active, the number of clericals required per board was so small that they do not seem to have presented a difficult problem. In 1944 when district specialists were engaged and the number of board volunteer supervisors was greatly increased, the organized program for clerical volunteers continued successfully on practically the same basis as from the beginning.

Student Clericals Region VI

Region VI with headquarters in Chicago seems to have been an exception to the above use of clerical volunteers. As early as February 1943 they were in dire need of increased volunteer assistance and began developing a plan whereby high-school students with honor grades gave one full school day every second week to volunteer work in the war price and rationing boards. This was an organized plan in every sense of the word. Like the St. Louis men's organization it is worthy of study both because it indicates another of the largely untapped sources of volunteers and because it indicates the success possible with almost any group of volunteers under a well organized plan.

The student project was pioneered in Quincy, Ill., February 1943, when 80 students were inducted, each to work 1 day every other week. This meant that 8 students were working in the board every day but Saturday. In March the program was extended to the whole State and all State school superintendents of Illinois were officially asked by the United States Government to cooperate. During the next 3½ months the plan was inaugurated in 265 local boards and

395 educational institutions participated by supplying over 16,000 honor students for the work. Twenty percent of these students chose to continue the work during their vacations. Students, educators, and OPA staff all seemed to be in agreement as to the success of the plan, and by fall 1943 it was extended to all war price and rationing boards in Region VI.

At this time complete details for installation of the student volunteer program were given to the district representatives responsible for the work. The plan was presented to school superintendents, to the board chairmen, and to civic leaders first by letter and then by personal interview. Publicity was arranged. Only after these preparations were the students themselves approached. Following are the detailed instructions for the presentation to the students and the later induction of students at the local boards:

7. (*a*) A general mass meeting held in one school attended by all students and the parents of honor roll pupils, members of the War Price and Rationing Board, school authorities, and heads of the municipal government. It is suggested that honor roll students should sit in a group preferably, on the platform immediately behind the speaker.

(*b*) Speech made by either board chairman, community service member, mayor, member of OCD or prominent citizen at mass meeting.

(*c*) Announcement of the names of honor roll students eligible for participation.

(*d*) Parental consent obtained during or by announcement at close of meeting (See Form SV–1.)

(*e*) Signing of student volunteer pledge. (See Form SV–9.)

(*f*) Meeting should be adequately covered by the press and good publicity secured. Community service member should arrange with newspaper photoraphers for group pictures, which with the names of the student volunteers participating, should appear in the press.

8. On the following Monday students from the first school assigned for that day will report to the chief clerk of the War Price and Rationing Boards.

(*a*) They will be sworn in by the chairman of the board and sign the oath of office. (See Form SV–8.) (Alternate arrangement—if facilities permit, students can be sworn in collectively at mass meeting.)

(*b*) Oaths of office and pledges will then be filed in the local board.

(*c*) Chief clerk will delegate one or more students to each panel clerk who will assign and train the student in the work of that department. The district representative should leave with the chief clerk a list of the duties which can be performed by the students.

9. It is extremely important that a close follow-up by district representatives be maintained until the program is functioning correctly.

10. It is the responsibility of the community service member to keep the public interest alive. Timely newspaper articles or other releases should be made at least every 2 weeks. These releases should cover unusual services of the student, using their names and pictures; comments of school heads, civic leaders, representatives of the OCD and local government officials should be obtained for publication; expressions from the board chairman and chief clerk, emphasizing that the excellent service being rendered the public is due to the diligent and in-

telligent assistance volunteered by the youth of the community. Community service members should send report to district information officer on the first and fifteenth of each month, covering the activities, attaching clippings of newspaper releases.[5]

Any program using volunteers could have profited by a study of these instructions.

Unfortunately no such well-organized plan was used in recruiting price panel assistants and by the beginning of 1945 the volunteer price program was definitely on trial. Records such as those of the emergency price check with its follow-up work in May had shown that a high degree of compliance could be gained by frequent and regular store checks. Volunteer specialists had been appointed in three-fourths of the districts of the country, but the number of price panel assistants did not seem to increase. Region I, which had never looked favorably upon volunteer price checking, was again urging the use of paid personnel. Region III, disappointed in its recruiting efforts, was toying with the same idea. Several cities in various parts of the country were experimenting with the use of paid employees lent by business firms. National office leadership seemed to have weakened. Early in 1944 the estimates were made and the need for approximately 125,000 price panel assistants was recognized. In spite of this, no national campaign was undertaken either to enlist the cooperation of the women's organizations or to increase consumer participation which might in turn lead to an increased understanding of the problem and to active help in the boards.

The OPA needed another 75,000 volunteers, and the new volunteer specialists and the new board supervisors were free to recruit them where they could. By the beginning of 1945 this was a dubious privilege. By the third year of the war civic-minded individuals, not otherwise employed, had already offered their services to one or another of the patriotic agencies. Except through some organized agency, it was practically impossible to get more than an occasional new recruit. Yet the national office made no official requests of the patriotic agencies or the national women's organizations. Because of a commitment to the Information Department, the Volunteer Section was not even permitted to approach the national groups directly. This prohibition held true at the regional level also and remained in effect until the middle of 1945. No large organizations were committed to furnishing volunteers for OPA. The district volunteer specialists had to make their own contacts and in many regions devise their own recruitment plans.

It took the specialists an average of 6 months each to build their volunteer corps into a dependable working unit. During this time

[5] Excerpt, "Student Volunteer Program for War Price and Rationing Boards", Region VI.

they found and trained the volunteer assistance supervisors. The number of these grew from 1,112 in July 1944 to 2,271 in July 1945. They set up reliable reporting systems, and gave out the volunteer awards when they were earned. They went over the old lists of volunteers, dropped those who were no longer interested, and recalled those who had been neglected but were available. The first national training material, the "Battle Line" series,[6] came out early in 1944. The district supervisors used these to advantage and improved the general average of training over the country. By a combination of relieving the paid clerks from certain responsibilities and making it clear that they were in no danger of being supplanted by the volunteers, the specialists established a more congenial atmosphere in which to receive the volunteers. Gradually a more stable corps of volunteers was built up. Slowly the average number of hours per volunteer increased. But the time had passed when one person, no matter how zealous, could easily find a large group interested in price control and free to give time to it. Only in areas where the specialists were exceptionally able and where the board operations staff gave them intelligent support, did the actual number of OPA volunteers increase.

According to the national volunteer specialist, Region VII (with headquarters in Denver, Colo.) achieved the most outstanding success under the organized program. Since Region VII made only slight use of volunteers before the appointment of volunteer specialists, a study of their methods will help in understanding the factors necessary for success.

The Volunteer Program in Region VII

This region contains the Rocky Mountain states of Colorado, Montana, Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, and New Mexico. Its distances are vast, its populatiton sparse, and travel extremely difficult. Its population varies from the Spanish Americans in New Mexico to the largely Scandinavian population in Utah. The volunteer program developed in this region reflects these difficulties and variations. The individual district office histories of the volunteer program and the over-all regional summary prepared after controls were lifted, reveal the varying methods used.[7]

The regional report[7] emphasizes that the regional administrator, the regional board executive, and the district board executives were wholeheartedly behind the work of the volunteer specialists. There are many indications in the regional histories that this in itself put volunteer work in Region VII in an unusually advantageous position. A second factor responsible for success was that the regional

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[6] A chronological list of all training material is included in the appendix.

[7] History of Volunteer Program, Region VII, Elizabeth Blanc. *OPA Bibliography, 1940–47,* item 10K.66.

volunteer specialist and four of the six district specialists were women with wide backgrounds in organizational work. The regional specialist herself mentions that: "In the two instances where board clerks were promoted to this position, their knowledge of OPA did not compensate for their lack of broad general experience." [8] However, five out of seven specialists with experience in volunteer organization and the firm support of the board operations officers put Region VII in an enviable position for building a volunteer program.

Recruitment was the main problem here as elsewhere. As the regional specialist put it:

> In the meantime, the Red Cross with its tremendous historic appeal, had been conducting an unending campaign for volunteer help. The American Women's Voluntary Services, with glamour and uniforms, was busily filling its ranks, and the Block Mothers, the Nurses' Aides, the USO and all the other war agencies had already established their claims to the rapidly diminishing supply of the so-called leisure group.[9]

In Montana the district specialist solved her recruitment problem by choosing as supervisors women already prominent in the various organizations of each town. Mrs. Fred Lively, appropriately the supervisor in Great Falls,[9] may have been the most energetic in the State, but she seems to have been fairly typical in her methods. She recruited a corps of 75 women and was apparently able to keep her ranks filled by the simple expedient of putting responsibility on a volunteer organization by asking it for a replacement whenever one of its members became inactive. But she did not depend upon the organization for keeping her volunteers interested in the program. She wrote each one a personal note with the monthly survey instructions; she thanked each price panel assistant for her work of the month before and told her of the general results. The loyalty and responsibility of this group was demonstrated in July 1946 during the weeks when OPA was legally "nonexistent." Not only the active but also inactive former volunteers crowded into the local board to see whether they could help. This loyalty to the program seems to have been typical of the volunteers throughout the State. Recruits were gained through the women's organizations and she educated them so thoroughly that they became not only price panel assistants but representatives of OPA in their communities. In this way she achieved one of the primary goals of community participation.

In Utah the recruitment problem was met through the cooperation of the Mormon Church. Church members were accustomed to the idea of volunteer community participation. Although all church members already had their civic duties assigned, once the church was

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[8] *Ibid.*
[9] *Ibid.*

persuaded of the need for this work their relief societies provided the workers.

Having undertaken the job, they did it thoroughly. Not content with checking the 15 or 20 items covered in most surveys, the price panel assistants of Salt Lake City checked every item on the community price list, 300 of them, each month. Little is said in this record about recruiting and nothing about retention. The price panel assistants were sufficient in number and gave a sufficient number of hours to do the work required. With these problems settled, the supervisor could concentrate upon training, and the price panel assistants were able to check 20 times the national number of items. The result was obvious: the national compilation of regional reports, April 1945,[10] gives Salt Lake City as leading the country in compliance.

New Mexico developed a unique plan. There the lead was taken by the district board executive, John E. Campbell, who persuaded all divisions of the district to cooperate in monthly surveys to cover all retail outlets of every kind. This implied the preparation of 35 different surveys by the price department each month; 8 was about the limit in other areas. It required a careful schedule of training meetings in different parts of the State conducted jointly by price and enforcement specialists. It necessitated the recruitment of the highest percentage of volunteers, in proportion to retail population, in the country. To hold those volunteers, a second series of meetings was held each month, clinics to discuss the results of the surveys. The advice of the price panel assistants was sought on methods of meeting the conditions found in the surveys. Campbell, in his account of the work in New Mexico, stresses the fact that the price panel assistants were made an integral part of the panel meetings. This may account partially for the fact that the number of price panel assistants in New Mexico grew from 210 in March 1944 to 816 in May 1945. This number represented almost 50 percent of all the price panel assistants in region VII. New Mexico also had the largest community service group in the region, and outside of California, had the largest group in the country. The volunteer records do not show the number of panel members at this time, but Campbell speaks of the necessity of enlarging the panels to take care of the increased work. The number of panels per board was increased from 5 to 9, and in Albuquerque the number of panel members was increased from 25 to 200. The compliance in New Mexico can scarcely be compared with that in other States because no other State had compliance records on all of its retail outlets.

Perhaps the main significance of this "experiment" lay in its demonstration of the possibilities of a unified plan. All divisions of OPA

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[10] Board Operations files.

were involved in the price control program of the local boards. With all units cooperating, the permanent staff was adequate to keep this large organization moving effectively. In Campbell's report no reference is made to the methods of recruiting 816 price panel assistants in an area where there were only 8,028 retail outlets, but he does mention that price panel assistants frequently brought friends to the monthly "clinic" on "inflation control." Perhaps the enthusiasm of the staff was contagious. Certainly the results in community interest and community participation were astounding.

Denver, too, developed several original sources for volunteers. The commanding officer at the Glenwood Springs Sanitarium agreed to allow convalescing soldiers to do clerical work at the boards, and, when they were able, to survey the local stores. Returning soldiers proved to be interested in the problems of inflation. They enjoyed the experience of price checking and asked for more stores to cover. The chaplain was appointed liaison officer, or volunteer supervisor, and with the help of the chief clerk made out a weekly schedule showing how many men would be needed and where they were to report. A panel member offered his car, and the price panel assistants surveyed not only Glenwood but all the towns for some miles around. The experience was successful enough for both the men and price control so that the arrangement was duplicated with several other hospitals in the region.

Denver also made extensive use of college student volunteers. This plan, while not unique in Region VII, was developed so thoroughly there that it became known as the Denver plan. Arrangements were made with faculty members in economics, merchandising, and home economics, so that their students were given laboratory credit for making store surveys. An average of 2 hours per week field work was allowed as 1 hour credit, and a monthly minimum of 8 hours was required from each student. At Colorado College the work of the students was rated jointly by the merchants, the OPA staff, and the class teacher. Training was given by the supervisor on specific surveys, and once or twice a year OPA specialists were brought in to discuss the broader economic aspects of the work. A 1946 report from Denver mentions 8 colleges as participating in this cooperative plan.

The monthly board reports show that the district volunteer specialists of Region VII achieved their goal: they provided the operating divisions with volunteers. The problems of recruitment were conquered. The caliber of the volunteers was unusually high and the training was thorough enough in many cases to meet college standards. Retention problems are not even mentioned in any of the district histories. The number of price panel assistants within that region increased from 570 in March 1944 to 2,142 in July 1945, an increase of nearly 400 percent in 16 months. In the same period the total number

of all volunteers in the region increased 250 percent from 2,851 to 7,861.

Since these results were not duplicated nationally, it is worth underlining the circumstances which seem to have contributed to such success. The district supervisors who were most effective were women with wide public relations experience; in most cases they worked through organizations, not on an individual recruiting basis; and, most important from their own observations, they had the full cooperation of the board operations officers.

The national volunteer figures told a different story. The March 1944 number of 40,757 price panel assistants rose to 46,000 in June, sagged slowly over the next year until in July 1945 it was only 37,480. The goal of 125,000 price panel assistants was quietly forgotten. Reconversion was in the air and the national office board management never made a major drive for volunteers.

The validity of the administrative techniques used at the local level does not rest upon the number of volunteers gained in 1945. The experience in Region VII demonstrates that the techniques were basically sound. Had they been in effect in 1943 when volunteers were more plentiful, it is possible that the survey needs of 1945 could have been met. Even in 1945 had they been tried as wholeheartedly throughout the country as in Region VII it seems fair to assume that an appreciable over-all increase in volunteers would have resulted. But the cooperation between operating divisions achieved in Region VII was almost unique and national office leadership in this respect was at least confused. By 1945 the effectiveness of the entire price panel system was jeopardized by this failure to recruit enough price panel assistants to make the surveys. The compliance value of volunteer price checking can only be evaluated in those areas where there were enough price panel assistants to make regular and frequent surveys. In these cases the monthly records are conclusive and consistent.

Administratively the volunteer program was greatly improved after the hectic days of the emergency price check. The Office of Board Operations, reorganized as the Division of Boards, had been given full administrative authority for the boards in the fall of 1944. They were given complete administrative supervision, and technical supervision had to be filtered through them. Interdepartmental squabbles were reduced by this unity of approach. But the price program was a controversial one, calling for aggressive leadership, and in only one or two parts of the country did the board executives give it this all-out support. Administratively the operation of the boards improved, but the national number of price volunteers never increased appreciably after the Price Division lost contact with the volunteers.

CHAPTER 11

Volunteers, 1946

In November 1945 the monthly publication for volunteers carried the names of 128 people who had given more than 5,000 hours each to OPA.[1] The number that had given more than 1,000 hours each, ran into thousands. These long-term volunteers, added to the board members who had already served 3 and 4 years, made up the backbone of the volunteer program. They were the "faithful" volunteers, rationing or price, who stayed on to do whatever was needed during the various crises of the final year of price control.

Reorganization

The peak of the volunteer program occurred in June and July 1945, shortly before VJ-day. With the shooting war over, people in all occupations needed a reaffirmation of purpose to hold them to their work. No such word was sent, however, from the national office to the volunteers; instead the work in the boards was practically paralyzed by a series of reorganizations and consolidations. For nearly 4 years OPA had been reiterating that the main inflationary peril would come after the military victory; but when that time arrived all national programs for volunteer work were called to a halt. Within the next few weeks the Volunteer Section and the positions of all the volunteer specialists were abolished. The price panel division was abolished and the price surveys suspended. On the rationing side, gasoline rationing ended immediately after VJ-day, and other rationed commodities were released in the next 2 months. Announcement was made that the local boards would be "consolidated," and their number reduced from the 5,100 then existing to about 2,000 by the end of the year. To both volunteers and paid staff in the boards it appeared that OPA's programs were finished.

This was not the case so far as price controls were concerned, though the decision was presently reached to end all rationing except of sugar

[1] See appendix for facsimile of page from "Volunteeers."

with the end of the year. But the demobilization of rationing in itself forced a complete reconsideration of the scope and direction of further activities in the field offices and in the boards. The decision on gasoline was sudden, and it made irrelevant all the plans for reorganization that had been going forward during the summer. The congressional appropriations committees called for immediate and drastic cuts in expenditure rates and presently commenced hearings to determine the amount of appropriations to be rescinded. The frailties in field office support and supervision of price work in the boards, and the continuing indifference to Price on the part of many rationing-minded board members themselves, were now well recognized in the national office; changes were in order in any event as the focus of field work concentrated on Price and Rent.

In this atmosphere of uncertainty, with no one knowing just how fast and how far retrenchment might reach, the Price Department made an informal bid to take over the conduct and supervision of all remaining board activities. Enforcement went further, suggesting that the boards be dispensed with altogether and that their budget be devoted instead to a professional enforcement effort on a scale that might for the first time be adequate to its task. Bowles set too high a value on the boards as political assets to OPA in the broadest sense to agree to such an exchange. His decision against both these proposals was promptly made, but hopes lingered in some quarters that it might be changed. It was not; he picked one of the ablest operating executives OPA had developed to take charge of a newly constituted Office of Price Board Management, to liquidate the rationing activities according to a timetable and to rebuild an effective price board operation. It was no longer necessary to serve the convenience of consumers in every neighborhood who needed ration books, but it was still essential to reach every retail trade center. In the process of board consolidation there was some opportunity to select for retention those people with the best price control records. The reorganization proceeded vigorously in Washington during the fall.

What the national office neglected, however, was the state of mind of the volunteers during this period of reorientation. They were left largely in ignorance of these Washington developments. No message came from the top, addressed to them, affirming again the need for their work and its importance. Neither the paid nor the volunteer staff were assured of the continuance of the volunteer program. The result could have been forecast: the volunteers melted away.

The new price board executives in the district offices took over the boards in October only to find that the number of volunteers had dropped by 50 percent. In November the national office showed interest in reclaiming them. Letters stressing the importance of volunteers were sent out from the Administrator, the Assistant to the

Administrator in charge of Price Boards, the Labor Policy Committee, the Consumer Advisory Committees, and the National Veterans Advisory. However, no clarification of a specific program was offered and the drop continued.

A certain loss in volunteers was to be expected. With the end of the war the patriotic urge weakened and with the end of rationing many of the clerical volunteers felt their work was over. Some of these people could have been salvaged for an expanded price program but no one had been given instructions to recruit for this purpose. In December the national office made a definite move: by teletype they instructed each district to rehire the volunteer specialists. In most cases this meant finding and training new people. The new specialists did a valiant pick-up job but the damage had been done. By March 1946 the reduction in volunteer services for the country was 79 percent.[2] The work at the boards had not decreased by any such proportion, and the need for price activity had increased. The boards, although reduced to 1,885 in number, still had 2,000,000 retail outlets to supervise.

The Situation in March 1946

The reduction in numbers did not affect all types of volunteers to the same extent. The price panel members suffered least of all in the various reorganizations. As rationing disappeared from the boards the importance of their work became more obvious. Many of the ablest rationing board members moved over to price. The administrative techniques surrounding their work were much improved. The number of price clerks was increased and an excellent docket system was introduced. The volunteers were fewer but the additional price clerks made surveys and brought in cases for panel consideration.

In addition there were no new techniques for the panels in 1946. The panels received their early grounding in the regulations from the price staff and they had their early training in Administrator's Claim techniques from the combined price and enforcement staffs. At last the local board loose-leaf service contained a complete explanation of their work, and at long last copies were available for each member. The price board executives did a careful job of briefing new members. Perhaps most important of all, the price panels had continuing technical supervision from the Enforcement Board Coordinator. Every case was reviewed and initialled by the Enforcement Coordinator before final acceptance. In spite of the shifts of consolidation the number of price panel members decreased by only 13 percent. Price panels were active and effective in a higher percentage of boards than at any previous time. The number of cases they were able to review

[2] Operational report analysis, April and May 1946.

and the number of claims they were able to settle increased steadily. In March 1946 they negotiated 6,153 Administrator's Claims, nearly 2,000 more than in the previous peak in July 1945.

The information panels (formerly community service), also retained their direct line of supervision from the national office and benefited by that fact. The excellent information programming of the last year and a half of price control was initiated in the Information Department and passed through the regional information executives to the district information executives and from them direct to the information panels and information clerks. The leadership of the national office built this group up from its low of 3,000 in October 1944 (after the grocer-consumer campaign) to 14,496 in July 1945 and even after the consolidation held it to a steady 10,000.

After the consolidation of the boards individual Information members were kept on the mailing list in their own areas, were sent the publicity material, and continued to be responsible for OPA information even in towns where there was no longer a local board. This willingness and ability to carry the load independently of the board characterized the work of the community service members in 1946. Alert volunteer specialists such as those in Region VII were able to retain price panel assistants in isolated towns on much the same basis. This independent action for OPA had its parallel in the earlier work of the distribution rationing officers. In 1946 the information executives made this method a national policy and in so doing accomplished a truly "grass-roots" information program.

Only the board representatives (formerly called price panel assistants) suffered an irretrievable blow in the reorganization. They were completely cut off from contact with their parent organization, the price division. In most cases they were also cut off from their former administrative supervisors, the volunteer specialists. Their work, surveying the stores, was the front line in the price battle. To meet the constant fire of retailer criticism of OPA and questions about OPA they needed constant training and frequent renewal of their faith in the price program. This the board management officers seemed unable to give. Even the surveys no longer emanated from the price division. They became more complex and required more careful technical training. The price board officers found it easier to give this training to the paid price clerks. The clerks were at hand when wanted and specialization of service (some clerks worked only on groceries, some on consumer durable goods, etc.), counted heavily in their favor. The board representatives, once shown by the OWI to be predominantly college women, were now considered incapable of making the more important of the price surveys. But in spite of the handicaps, 50 percent of this group were still on the job in March 1946. The dignity of their position was never greatly improved. For

the first year of the program they were given almost no administrative supervision and during the last year they were slighted on the technical training. The wonder is that so many remained so faithful. Up to the closing day nearly every board had a few responsible, trained, persistent, and faithful board representatives who worked closely with the price clerks.

Price Board Management Plans

The records of the price board management executives and the volunteer specialists show that they did a good job of analyzing the needs of a volunteer program. They saw that people could be counted on in an emergency; peak load volunteers were always available. They saw that people will give themselves unstintingly to an "honorable" job; in spite of the long hours and the difficulties, there was never a serious lack of board members. For the dull in-board clerical jobs it became obvious to them that a volunteer supervisor or her equivalent was necessary. Their experience proved that someone had, first, to impress upon the volunteer the necessity of the work she was being asked to perform and, second, show her how to do it. Someone had to be ready to arrange for variety or more convenient work at times, and perhaps most important of all, someone had to give recognition for work well done.

In several regions the board executives were aware of the needs and potential value of the board representatives. In the spring of 1946, California, Chicago, and Philadelphia, all sent plans to the national office for strengthening, enlarging, and acknowledging the importance of this branch of the volunteer service. In each, the board representatives were to be made board members, so that, as the California plan put it, they would at last be treated with respect by the other board members. The Chicago "Consumer Cost Committees" not only emphasized board membership but added a paid clerk to transact the business of these survey boards members, stipulated that they should have representation at the panel meetings, and access to price information at the boards. All of these plans had value, they proposed to remedy weaknesses inherent in the program from its beginning, but they came too late in 1946 to be put into effect.

The above plans recognized serious omissions in the organizational structure but it was a district volunteer specialist in southern California who put her finger on the national failure to give full support to the volunteers even under the existing national structure. Her remarks apply equally well to any use of volunteers on a national basis. In August 1945 she wrote:

> I would suggest setting up from the beginning of the program a well-organized, well-planned national advertising program, identifying the OPA volunteer staff

with the other volunteer agencies, such as Red Cross, AWVS, NAA, etc. Carrying this further, organizational contacts of all types of national groups should be made, followed by State and community contacts, with each group pledging a certain number of people and a set number of hours.

This specialist added another suggestion which may not have such universal application but is nevertheless significant in an appraisal of the difficulties in retaining volunteers: "In conclusion, each individual board should have a separate room for volunteers with sufficient desk space and supplies." [3]

The Office of Price Management in Washington did not make any of the suggested changes nor undertake any national advertising programs but they did send to the field a very good volunteer aid manual with recruitment suggestions for the volunteer specialists. This manual put renewed emphasis on the OPA volunteer awards and many districts turned with relief to this aspect of volunteer work.

Awards and Recognition

The first field directive on volunteers provided that after 50 hours of service the volunteer was eligible for membership in the United States Citizens Service Corps, an award of the Office of Civilian Defense. At that time it was not contemplated that OPA would set up a separate award system. However it soon became evident that volunteers who stayed with the program any length of time thought of themselves first and foremost as OPA volunteers, and they wanted recognition of that relationship.

In October 1943 the National Volunteer Specialist designed a plastic button for both regular volunteers and price panel assistants who had completed their course of training and received the oath of office. On the button within a fine blue border were the letters OPA and a scale as the symbol of equal distribution. Below the scale in red were the words, "War Price and Rationing Boards" and below that "Volunteer" in blue.

The awards had scarcely reached the field when requests came back for some recognition of length of service. A war service award certificate was designed for those who had served 100 hours. This was signed by the OPA Administrator, the district director, and the board chairman. In 1945 small red V's were designed to be added to this certificate to indicate the volunteer's total service. Each red V had "100 hours" embodied on it in white. A similar but slightly more elaborate certificate was designed for board members. Its most significant addition was the signature of the President of the United States.

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[3] Memorandum, Carolyn Craig MacPhee, district volunteer specialist, San Diego, Calif., to Edward Everett, Jr., regional board executive, August 24, 1945. Volunteer files.

When the certificates were decided upon, two additional pins were designed. The distinguished service pin was given to volunteers who had served 500 hours and the meritorious service button to board members with 3 months' service. Both pins were made of scrap steel covered with oxidized silver.

By the time these service pins reached the field 500 hours was a common length of service and still another award became necessary. This time a service bar or ribbon was designed. It represented 1,000 hours of service for board volunteers and 1 year's service for board members. To this could be added small V's, silver for volunteers and gold for board members, each representing respectively 500 additional hours and 1 additional year of service.

No one can accuse OPA of squandering money on these emblems. Fifteen cents apiece was the highest cost of any award, but they were well designed and the volunteers wore them with pride. Certainly the intrinsic value of the pins was not enough to spur people to work thousands of hours, but as a recognition of having worked those hours their value was inestimable. In May 1947 a Senator telephoned to OPA to say that one of his constituents had served many months in the local board at home but somehow had never received his presidential certificate. The Senator wished OPA to verify the records and send him the proper award.

Many of the boards made a yearly ceremony of presenting the awards. In some towns the mayor or civic organizations gave banquets. There were newspaper reporters and photographs of the volunteers who had given over 5,000 hours. In Baltimore, Md., a retired mail carrier gave almost 8 hours a day for almost 5 years; he wore the service ribbon and V's registering over 8,000 hours. In San Francisco the Negro janitor of a nearby building earned his volunteer award by sweeping the board each morning before working hours; in Pueblo, Colo., the fire department "uniforms and all" were decorated for "the large amount of carpentry work they did for us";[4] in Washington, D. C., a troop of Girl Scouts with headquarters near the district office had grown up during their 4 years of Saturday mailing for the OPA. Every local community had its own roster of faithful volunteers.

At the End

During the price control hiatus of July 1946, although survey work was at a standstill, board after board reported that the number of volunteers increased. Even the "inactives" came back to show their desire to help at this crucial time. After July 26 the boards tried to pick up the threads and go on. Meat, poultry, and dairy products

[4] Chief clerk account of Record Board, Pueblo, Calif., *OPA Bibliography, 1940–47,* item 10K.64.

were exempt under the new law. One hundred and forty-two price orders, either raising the price of items or decontrolling them, had been issued the first day of OPA's renewed existence. More items were decontrolled each day. It was difficult to remember which things were under control and which were not. The restaurant controls were so confused under the new law that surveys were forbidden. Then on September 10 meat was put back under control, and promptly disappeared from the meat counters. A month later President Truman announced the end of meat controls and meat prices jumped to a new high. The Gallup poll on October 26 showed that 58 percent of the people now opposed the price program. The housewives who had been warned not to be price policemen, who had been refused price lists of their own, did not understand what was left of the program and at last they deserted it. On October 31 announcement was made that the local boards would be closed to the public on November 4. The volunteer program was over.

Within the next month, records were put in order to be sent to the Archives and the final meetings were held. President Truman sent a presidential certificate award to each board member and volunteer who had stayed on the job to the end. Many boards held meetings of paid personnel and volunteers to receive the final awards.

In one such board the chairman, a retired army colonel, presided as he had from the first days of rationing. After the district director's speech the colonel reminisced. He told of his first ration board in a sixth grade school room where the waiting applicants had to crouch in children's desks. He told of his awakening interest in the price program when a lawyer friend became chairman of the price panel. He remembered the time that his price clerk went to a grocery store at 4 o'clock in the morning to help the new proprietor get everything properly marked because she knew there was to be an area survey by 10. And the time his price panel assistants scooped the country with a 100 percent record on the day that restaurant posting became obligatory. They had visited each restauranteur an average of 3 times the previous week, explaining, exhorting, and, when necessary, getting the lists printed for them. He himself had aided the cause by getting newspaper coverage on the posting day. He confessed to his embarrassment and his difficulties in explaining to 40 Chinese laundrymen, through an interpreter, the methods of charging for large and small bath towels. He remembered his board's first Administrator's Claim, $501 for overcharges on nylon stockings. He recounted with pride the compliance record of his area. In closing he said that anyone who wished to see him during the next few weeks could find him there at the board. He had been given permission to go over the records as he was writing a history of price control and rationing in his board.

CHAPTER 12

Conclusions

The kind and degree of volunteer participation given to OPA between January 1942 and December 1946 constitute one of the major phenomena of our national war effort. At a time when most able-bodied people had full time jobs, when most jobs demanded more than normal working hours, when transportation was difficult, when the mechanics of living were time consuming, the people of this country nevertheless took millions of man-hours from their nonexistent leisure to give to the support of rationing and price control. Men and women served as volunteers from coast to coast, from north to south, and in our territories. They served in our largest cities, in fashionable suburbs, in Harlem, in Chinatown, in villages and at country cross roads. They worked in every major field of control; rationing, price, information, and enforcement. They performed functions ranging from clerical through administrative, advisory, informational, investigatory, and adjudicative. With very little press approval, with almost no glamour attached, with some opposition from within the agency, with a minimum of "expert handling of volunteers", and in spite of the jurisdictional conflicts inherent in a newly organized agency, the number of volunteers in OPA grew from 20,000 on the opening of the boards in January 1942 to 275,000 in August 1945, VJ-day.

By any standard the volunteer administration of rationing and price control was a success. The rationing board members successfully administered 18 programs over a period of 4 years. The price panel members successfully mediated hundreds of thousands of consumer complaints during the first year of their existence, and in the last 2 years of price control they negotiated settlements for 71,050 Administrator's Claims resulting in $391,347 in refunds to customers and $5,132,658 in returns to the United States Treasurer. They kept retail violations from becoming popular. In the areas where price panel assistants were used consistently they reduced the grocery store

violations from an average of 75 percent to as low as 4 percent. The clerical volunteers and the community service members effectively supported these programs at great financial savings to the agency and to the taxpayers of the country.

These programs were successful but any programs set up with such phenomenal speed and under such pressures were bound to suffer from both organizational and administrative weaknesses. These weaknesses affected and limited the work of the volunteers and must be recognized for the sake of any future need for a similar service.

1. The first use of volunteers came in the rationing program in January 1942, almost before OPA was aware of it. By something approaching an organizational miracle these volunteers were functioning in less than a month after Pearl Harbor, and in 2 weeks after a specific program materialized. Board members were nominated by the local councils of defense and appointed by the State Governors, 20,000 of them, during this period. These first hastily appointed members were not always wise choices for positions of such power. They did not always fully represent a cross section of the community. These errors in appointment gave rise to charges of discrimination and favoritism which, though few in number, were a threat to the over-all effectiveness of the program.

A second weakness in performance stemmed from the very fact that board members were representatives of the local community. As such they were more conscious of community pressures and desires than of the over-all national needs. An outstanding example of the dangers in this situation was the overissuance of gasoline, especially by boards in the oil-producing States.

The operational inadequacies of OPA in those early months gave still further cause for errors in performance at the local boards. Frequently the forms and applications and instructions were late in arriving. The instructions themselves were too numerous, too long, and too legalistic. Not enough explanation was made of the reasons behind the regulations to ensure understanding and support in the local areas. At the beginning almost no allowance was made for the differences in local conditions.

Eventually OPA remedied most of these defects but the important fact to be noted is that in spite of all these weaknesses the program did not break down. The patriotic zeal of the volunteers carried them through the confusion and difficulties of the early days and in spite of errors, even injustices, the communities accepted rationing as a local responsibility. It was theirs and they carried it through.

2. The Price Division failed to take advantage of the patriotic fervor following Pearl Harbor. Although the price control act was

passed in January 1942, the month the rationing boards opened, community participation was not enlisted in the price program until more than a year later. When in 1943 volunteers were finally invited to become board members for the price program, recruiting was done by the local OPA staff on a district to district basis rather than by a national office appeal, across the country, as in the case of rationing. In spite of this, public-spirited citizens responded and 20,000 price panel members were appointed in those first 3 months. Their work was crippled in several ways by the year's delay. To begin with the housewives who had been urged not to be price policemen had accepted their passive role. They failed to send complaints to the local board when they were overcharged. Even as late as 1945, an OWI survey showed that only 7 percent of the women interviewed had ever reported a violation. In addition a series of surveys showed that the women did not question or verify prices when they marketed. This source of community support was almost completely lost to the price panels and to the program. Any agency following down a similar path would do better to capitalize on the initial gains that are possible through community acceptance of and responsibility for a program.

The price panel members also found their work more difficult because of the attitude of the rationing board members. After a year at the local boards in which price had been only a name, the rationing personnel, paid and volunteer, resented the addition of new volunteers and new problems. In some cases the board chairmen actively obstructed the work of the price panels. If, another time, a dual program is to be carried in one operating unit, either both programs should be established at one time or an aggressive central office campaign should be undertaken to educate all personnel to acceptance of the new situation.

In some areas the price program was even more seriously obstructed by the attitudes and disbeliefs of the district staff. A large degree of district and regional autonomy developed during the first year of price control. As noted some executives developed their own schemes during this period, others who were opposed in principle to the use of volunteers resented the 1943 decision and failed to give the program more than lip service. Under these conditions the volunteer contribution withered. Because of inadequate reporting systems it was difficult for the national office to put its finger on either the cause or the exact spot of volunteer failure.

In 1945 a national docket system and attendant statistical charts changed this situation. From then on districts were rated monthly on a national scale and poor performance laid directly on the doorstep of the executive responsible.

Two points should be noted, one relating to the mechanics of operation, the other to the personal element which can never be eliminated. First an adequate reporting system is essential in a decentralized operation. Second, it was not only necessary to have a paid staff large enough to keep the volunteer organization moving but that paid staff must be committed to the program. Volunteers made successful contributions to price control in every region and almost every district at some time between January 1942 and December 1946. But in every successful operation some responsible staff executive believed in the principle of community participation and took the initiative in translating that belief into support for the volunteer effort.

In some areas industry members were appointed to panels covering their own trade. Almost always this proved to be a mistake. But on the whole the district directors profited by their experience in rationing and saw to it that the price panel members were not only responsible members of the community who believed in price control and that they represented a cross section of the community but also that they had no financial interest in the commodity which their panel handled. When in 1944 the price panels were delegated power to negotiate settlement for the Administrator's Claim they displayed the tendency, seen in rationing members, to feel closer to their local community than to national regulations. Some panels were unwilling to recommend a treble damage settlement against a member of their own community. As in rationing it took training and frequent review of performance to educate these panels to their responsiblity.

3. Price panel assistants suffered even more than panel members from the administrative indecisions and conflicts of the first year of price control. The price panel assistants represent the one agency failure in recruitment. OPA was unable to enlist them in sufficient numbers to carry out the objectives of the program. Although nearly 50,000 were enrolled at the peak of the program they never reached the goal of 125,000 needed for systematic checking of the Nation's retail outlets. A search for the reasons of this partial failure brings us back to the name-calling of 1942 and to the basic motivation of volunteer workers. The experience of all the big volunteer agencies bears out the statement that one who works without financial return must receive community recognition of the value of his work. In general this public approval was denied to the volunteer price checkers. The phraseology applied to these volunteers in 1942, by OPA officials opposed to the plan, never quite died out of the public mind. When in 1943 the national office decided that it was necessary to use price panel assistants in educational and compliance work they made every effort to prevent any action or approach to action, which could be construed

as "snooping." The first commandment for all price panel assistants was "Introduce yourself to the manager." But the early impression made upon the public mind was stronger than the facts in the case. Every district history mentions the snooping charge as a deterrent to recruitment. Even the Office of Civilian Defense, the agency supposed to recruit for OPA, in many areas refused, or failed, to recruit for this service. Late in the life of the price control program, OPA officials attempted to remedy this situation. It was suggested that the position of price checker be dignified, that he be given training and board membership on an equal footing with rationing, price, and community service members. It was suggested that a national recruiting campaign be undertaken redefining the job and presenting it with the sponsorship of the national women's organizations. These plans came too late in 1946 to be used but should be considered carefully in any future use of volunteers in survey work.

These 1946 plans were correct in their emphasis. The last 2 years when price panel assistants were supervised by the board operations staff proved that administrative supervision alone did not solve their problems. Administrative supervision was never more that a secondary consideration with the board members. But a separate entity, definite leadership, and a clearly defined group objective with group responsibility were the decisive factors in each branch of the volunteer service. There was no substitute for technical supervision and direct channels of communication from the program divisions above the boards.

4. The community service members were given an accredited position in the boards and they had community respect throughout the program but they suffered from national office indecision as to the role of the consumer in price control. When educating the community seemed of vital importance, as in the first year of Chester Bowles' administration, their number doubled and trebled; when this emphasis shifted as it did during the grocer-consumer campaign, their number dropped to an all-time low. Again, in the last year of price control when they received definite and regular programs from the national office their number again grew and then remained stable in spite of the general decline in volunteers. Community Service members, like price panel assistants, responded mercurially to the inspiration of technical leadership from the national office.

5. Administrative supervision was as necessary to volunteers as to paid personnel. It was important wherever large numbers of volunteers were used without definite organization or leadership of their own. This applied particularly to the clerical volunteers, in most areas to the price panel assistants, and, whenever technical supervi-

sion was withdrawn, to the community service members. OPA was slow to realize the need for supervisors who understood the psychology of the volunteers. Not until the installation of volunteer specialists did OPA formulate nationally the most elementary precepts for personnel work with people who are giving their services to a cause: (1) volunteer records must be kept as scrupulously as those of paid personnel; the time given must seem important both to the agency and the volunteer; (2) the volunteer's possible limitations on available hours must be respected and discounted in plans for performance; (3) since the volunteer comes to the program through interest, a definite effort must be made to sustain that interest; generally speaking, training is his minimum wage, and (4) the volunteer must be given public recognition for work well done.

A few of the lessons to be learned from OPA experience apply specifically to volunteers but the majority of them apply to paid as well as volunteer personnel in any decentralized operation. With this in mind certain generalizations and warnings may be stated. First, in the administration of a central policy through a widespread local system, communication becomes a matter of paramount importance. Instructions must arrive on time. They must be simple and definite. They should be easily available to all personnel. Contacts must be frequent. Training must be continuous to provide for changes in program and changes of personnel. Training material must be adapted to the experience of the people receiving it. Above all the reasons behind the instructions must be carefully given. They must be clear and convincing to the people far removed from the source of authority. Second, performance must be constantly reviewed to prevent the establishment of incorrect patterns and reporting systems must be adequate to allow for realistic evaluation of performance. Third, in operations as technical and as varied as those of rationing and price control both administrative and technical supervision are necessary. OPA experience would seem to prove that while administrative supervision may be given successfully on an over-all board basis, excellence of program performance depends upon technical supervision and motivation routed in a direct line from the central office. Multiple supervision of board activities was one of the administrative problems never fully solved by OPA. And lastly, central office authority should recognize that local conditions vary. Whenever possible regulations should be drawn to allow for discretion, well defined and limited, but still discretion, on the part of the local administrator, paid or volunteer.

The final conclusion to be drawn from OPA's experience in volunteer local board administration cannot be expressed in terms of adminis-

trative lessons, nor even in an appraisal of program achievements and failures. It lies rather in the recognition that the democratic urge toward participation in the processes of government is still strong in the American people. In any national emergency they can be counted on to contribute "their common effort for our common good"; more than that, they must be reckoned with. Under OPA they volunteered for a national emergency and they stayed on the job as long as they were persuaded of national need. They shaped what they found. They stayed through the hard hours and the dull hours for four long gruelling years. Their dollar contribution based on the lowest clerk salary scale, runs in to millions. Their contribution to the processes of democratic administration of Federal policy can scarcely be overestimated.

APPENDIX

RHODE ISLAND

Procedural Chart —Part 1

Price Panel Meeting
First Hour
Open to Public

This work obviously cannot be done without a working knowledge of price control. Study fundamental requirements of GMPR: price ceilings, posting, filing of cost-of-living lists; keeping of base lists and records. Remember that GMPR itself is one of many regulations, and that GMPR has been changed.

Panel sits as a board to receive public and listen to price complaints, give pricing information to storekeepers, and to give out forms and printed educational material.

Clerk assists in filling out interview sheets, obtains copies of printed forms for distribution, and generally assists on other clerical work during first hour of meeting.

COMPLAINTS

Virtually all consumer complaints deal with overcharge, lack of visible compliance, or low quality.

1.—*Overcharge:* Advise complainant case will be investigated and action taken if violation found; that complainant will be informed by letter.

2.—*Lack of visible compliance:* Complainant states store "not posted," which lends to belief he has been overcharged. Advise as above.

3.—*Low-quality commodities:* Complainant declares price no higher but product is inferior. Advise as above.

(NOTE.—Investigation preliminaries should be taken according to procedure set forth in Part 3, "Complaints.")

PRICING ADVICE

Price questions by retailers deal primarily with:

1.—"How do I price this product?

2.—"Do I have to file a price list?"

3.—"What about posting?"

4.—"My wholesaler's price has risen; can I raise mine?"

Answers to 1, 2, and 3: Check first to determine which regulation covers the product, whether a price list filing is required, and whether article is cost-of-living commodity requiring posting. (Refer to "Regulations in Force" manual.) Advise inquirer, give him copy of regulation, and tell him to return, if necessary, with specific questions after he has read it.

Specific questions on 1, 2, and 3, and all questions relating to 4, request answer from State Office, giving all facts. (No board price people can be expected to know upwards of 250 regulations or to keep abreast of changes therein. The job is a specialized, full-time one.)

Keep record of these interviews on interview sheets. (The question, the name of the inquirer, the answer given, etc. Send sheet to State Price Officer.)

FORMS, ETC.

Hand out forms, regulations, educational, and other material on request. Suggest supplementary reading material bearing on regulations requested.

Procedural Chart—Part 2

Price Panel Meeting
Second Hour
Closed to Public

Panel sits as a *judicial* body to hear retailers summoned to explain violations.

HEARINGS ON COMPLAINTS

Clerk takes full transcript of these hearings.

OVERCHARGE

1. State case to retailer—why he has been called. "Preliminary investigation shows probable violation." Take his testimony, examine records he has brought, etc., to obtain findings for decision.
2.—If no violation proved dismiss him.
3.—If violation certain, warn him, read enforcement clause of Control Act (Form C); give him copy of regulation covering his business or product in question; take statement from him that he has received the copy (Form D). Have him sign it. Send letter (Form B) to complainant.
4.—Make reports according to instructions (part 3). These include letter of advice, if any, to complainant, full report of action taken to State Price Officer.

LACK OF VISIBLE COMPLIANCE

1.—State case to retailer—why he has been called. Take his testimony. Warn him he must comply. Read enforcement clause of Control Act to him. Give him copy of regulation covering him. Take a signed receipt. Advise him recheck of store will be made in —— days.
2.—Make reports. (See part 3.)

LOW-QUALITY GOODS

(No hearings on these complaints. See part 3.)

WARNING.—Considerable discretion and clear-cut proof of violation are first requisites of action. *Be sure.* Is violation wilful? Are sales slip or other records substantiating? Screen cases carefully; act accordingly. Enforcement action by State Office will be taken on cases *found by you* to require such action.

Procedural Chart—Part 3

Price Panel Meeting
Third Hour
Closed to Public

CONFERENCE PERIOD

COMPLAINTS

1.—Take Preliminary Investigative Action on Consumer Complaints:

a. *Overcharge* (complaints brought in during first hour's open meeting). If consumer had a sales slip, check the slip against the price in the retailer's cost-of-living price list in board files. If overcharge is found, write retailer asking him to appear (during second hour) next week's meeting (Form E). If no sales slip, arrange to send price panel investigator to examine store's base list. If violation is found, ask retailer to appear as above (Form E). If no violation is found, as above, inform complainant by letter (Form A).

b. *Lack of visible compliance:* Send investigator to check store's posting, base list, records, and retailer's general attitude. If violations found, ask retailer to appear. (Send no letter to complainant in these cases.)

c. *Low-quality goods:* Send price panel investigator to talk to retailer. Get all facts. Note whether brands are changed or reduced quality is apparent. Report all findings to State Price Officer. Take no action at board level. Send no letter to complainant.

WARNING.—Discretion must be used in foregoing procedure. If violation is clearly apparent, retailer should be called in to explain. But many complaints are groundless. A retailer cannot be expected to appear against weak claims or to be called frequently without just cause.

PRICING ADVICE

Limit price advice to simple questions. Price information given out in this period by letter in reply to inquiry by letter, as differentiated from personal calls for information during first hour.

Answer only these questions:

a.—What regulation covers a given commodity?

b.—Is posting required?

c.—Is a list-filing required?

(Send copy of all price letters to State Price Officer.)

Send all other inquiries, together with all pertinent facts, to State Price Officer.

WORK PROGRESS

Lay plans for general work progress along these fundamental lines:

1.—That the job of the price panel is to inform the community how to comply with regulations.

2.—Take action against simple violations, and inform State Price Officer of the need for enforcement on major cases (Form F).

3.—Prepare and mail to State Price Officer complaint reports (Form F) and interview sheets.

4.—Keep State Price Officer informed as to how price regulations are working in the field; the need for educational work; the weak spots in compliance, etc. Recommend commodities for State Office surveys.

Specifically:

1. *Plan public meetings for separate classes of retailers, at which Zone Chief may give educational talk.*

2.—Plan class coverage of retailers by educational pamphlets, etc.

3.—Discuss price weakness observations and report conclusions to State Price Officer.

F. A. L.–23

OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D. C.

MAY 3, 1943.

FIELD ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER NO. 23 [1]

Use of Volunteers in War Price and Rationing Boards

Part I

Employment Standards and Procedures

SECTION 1. *Purpose.*—The purpose of this part is to describe the methods which shall be used in the recruitment, recognition and dismissal of volunteers for work in war price and rationing boards. Sections 1 through 8 apply to all volunteers except those recruited for emergency work (peak period volunteers) to whom only sections 1, 2, and 3 apply.

SEC. 2. *Relationships with the Office of Civilian Defense.*—The Office of Civilian Defense has the responsibility (Executive Order No. 9134) for recruiting volunteer workers in connection with all war activities of Federal agencies. Arrangements for the recruitment and registration of OPA volunteer assistance shall be made with the Office of Civilian Defense and its field organization.

SEC. 3. *Requests for Volunteers.*—Requests for volunteers shall be submitted by the board chairman to the local defense council or its volunteer office. Each request shall contain the following information:

A. Type of worker (typist, receptionist, etc.) needed;
B. Duties to be performed;
C. Number of men and women volunteers required;
D. A statement of qualifications desired;
E. The location of the board;
F. The minimum number of hours per day and per month which the volunteer is expected to give.

The request shall be signed by the board chairman.

If the local defense council or its volunteer office cannot provide the necessary number and types of volunteers, the board chairman shall recruit the volunteers from other sources in the community and shall notify the district office of the action taken.

SEC. 4. *Interviews of Prospective Volunteers.*—Prospective volunteers shall be interviewed by the board chairman, chief clerk or the vol-

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[1] Issued to the local boards in the Local Board Service as Local Board Administrative Letter, Organization No. 5.

unteer [2] assistance supervisor. Each prospective volunteer shall be requested to fill in the "Volunteer Personnel Data" side of OPA Form No. 572–9 prior to the interview. This data shall be used as an aid in the interview and in the placement of the volunteer. Volunteers appointed shall be representative of the community in which they work.

SEC. 5. *Oath of Office.*—Volunteers shall take a Volunteer Oath of Office, OPA Form No. 572–7, which shall signify agreement with the statement of his duties and responsibilities.

SEC. 6. *Recognition of Volunteer Workers.*—Volunteer workers who complete the training courses prescribed and operated by the board shall be presented with a Volunteer Certificate, OPA Form No. 572–8, by the chairman of the board.

When a volunteer completes 50 hours of service or other local requirements he is eligible for membership in the United States Service Corps. His name shall be forwarded to the executive of the Service Corps. Membership in the Citizens Service Corps is the official recognition of the Office of Civilian Defense for services performed by volunteers on the home front.

In boards where volunteers are already working they should be registered with the Office of Civilian Defense in order to become eligible for membership in the Citizens Service Corps on completion of 50 hours of service.

SEC. 7. *Termination of the Unsatisfactory Service by Volunteers.*—When a board chairman has determined that a volunteer has not given efficient service or has caused dissatisfaction among the volunteers, he shall request the local defense council or its volunteer office to terminate the services of the volunteer to the board by a given date.

Part II

Volunteer Assistance Supervisors

SECTION 1. *Purpose.*—The purpose of this part is to provide for the use of volunteer assistance supervisors in war price and rationing boards.

SEC. 2. *Appointment and Qualifications of the Volunteer Assistance Supervisor.*—Each board chairman shall appoint a volunteer assistance supervisor from nominations submitted by the local defense council or its volunteer office. In boards where volunteers are already working, the volunteer assistance supervisor may be chosen from this group. In selecting the volunteer assistance supervisor, the

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[2] See Part II of this Letter.

board chairman shall determine that the individual selected has the following qualifications:

A. Ability to work with others.

B. Ability to organize and supervise the work of others.

C. Maintain personnel data records and time reports on volunteer workers. The time report may be kept on OEM Form No. 396. It is required by the Office of Civilian Defense that a time report on volunteers be submitted.

D. Act as liaison officer with the defense council or its volunteer office in the recruitment of all volunteers needed for work with war price and rationing boards.

E. Arrange training courses for volunteers on the purpose and methods of operation of the Office of Price Administration and any necessary training in the specific tasks volunteers are to perform. These courses shall be conducted by a member of the district office staff or by the volunteer supervisor under the guidance of the board chairman or the chief clerk.

F. Forward the names of volunteers who have become eligible for membership in the United States Citizens Service Corps to the executive of the Service Corps.

G. Recommend to the board chairman for awards of Volunteer Certificates OPA Form No. 572–8 the names of volunteers who have completed the training courses prescribed and operated by the board.

H. Notify the board chairman of the names of volunteers who should be removed because they have not given satisfactory service.

Part III

Regular Volunteers

Section 1. *Purpose.*—The purpose of this part is to outline methods which should be followed in using regular volunteers to supplement the paid staff of the war price and rationing boards. The term "regular volunteers" shall be used to designate volunteer workers who are appointed with the understanding that they shall devote at least 30 hours a month to work in a war price and rationing board.

Sec. 2. *Placement.*—Regular volunteers may be placed in positions such as the following:

A. Receptionist.

B. Registrar.

C. Stenographer, typist.

D. Correspondence clerk.

E. Recording and reporting clerk

F. Filing clerk.

G. Certificate processing clerk.

H. Counter clerk.

I. Telephone clerk.

SEC. 3. *Estimates on Number Needed.*—The number of regular volunteers which a board needs to provide adequate assistance to the paid staff will vary among boards. In general the number may be estimated as being three or four times the number needed if full time workers were employed.

SEC. 4. *Training and Assignment.*—Regular volunteers shall be trained in the over-all OPA program and when necessary in the specific duties of the jobs they are to fill. Regular volunteers shall report to the volunteer assistance supervisor of the board for assignment and scheduling of their work. In the absence of the volunteer assistance supervisor, the regular volunteers shall report to the chief clerk.

Part IV

Volunteers for Program Assistance—Price

SECTION 1. *Purpose.*—The purpose of this part is to provide for the use of price panel assistants as aides to panels engaged in the price control program.

SEC. 2. *Appointment of Price Panel Assistants.*—Whenever, in the judgment of the price panel, the successful performance of the various duties and functions assigned them requires the use of volunteer assistance, the chairman of the price panel shall certify this fact to the chairman of the war price and rationing board. The board chairman shall solicit nominations from the local defense council, and shall make such appointments from these nominations as are necessary to fulfil the needs of the price panel.

SEC. 3. *Qualifications.*—The price panel assistants should possess the following qualifications:

A. They should be persons of good character, who believe in the objectives of the Office of Price Administration.

B. They should have no direct financial interest in any retail establishment or be members of organizations which represent the retail trade. This does not preclude the appointment of members of consumer cooperatives as price panel assistants.

C. They should be able to devote sufficient time to their duties, and should agree to devote a specified amount of time on a regular weekly schedule to be fixed by the chairman of the price panel. To be most effective, a price assistant should be willing to spend from 3 to 4 hours a day, 2 to 3 days a week, on his or her assignment.

D. They should be intelligent, tactful, alert, neat, trustworthy, have the capacity to learn, and a willingness to work.

E. They should represent as nearly as possible a cross section of the community in which they live.

F. If possible, they should have had some training in the field of purchasing at retail, such as persons who have had courses in home economics, home and institution management, family economies, etc.

Sec. 4. *Functions and Duties.*—Price panel assistants may participate in the following types of price functions upon assignment by the price panel:

A. Distribution of informational materials to business establishments within the local board jurisdiction. In this connection, price assistants may be asigned to work with trade relations committees and with trade groups in the scheduling and programming of campaigns, clinics, meetings, etc. They may also engage in educating retailers on the requirements of those regulations upon which they have been specifically trained.

B. Dissemination of information to consumers on the various aspects of the price-control program. In this connection, price assistants may be assigned to work with the community service members of the war price and rationing board, with special wartime committees working under the auspices of the Office of Civilian Defense, and with groups or organizations interested in public education on price control.

C. Collection of price information for the use of the price panel. In this connection, price assistants may be assigned to obtain data in connection with the setting of community prices, to obtain information for the verification of consumer complaints, to check posted prices against established ceiling prices, and to check such visable evidence of compliance as posting, marking, and ticketing.

D. Preparation of materials for filing and other clerical assignments.

E. Performance of such other functions as may be assigned by the price panel after consultation with the district price representative assigned to work with the price panel.

F. The price panel assistants shall work directly under the supervision of the chairman of the price panel.

Sec. 5. *Training.*—The price panel and the district price representative shall make such arrangements for the training of price panel assistants as required for the programs for which price panel assistants are recruited and for specific assignments upon which they may be engaged.

Sec. 6. *Recognition.*—The price panel assistant who completes 50 hours or more of service is entitled to membership in the United States Citizens Service Corps as provided in part I above.

Prentiss M. Brown, *Administrator.*

PRICE PANEL ASSISTANT'S GUIDE

May 7, 1943

Your Part in the Food Price Program

As a major effort in the program to control food prices, the Office of Price Administration has issued, for your community, dollar-and-cent prices on certain food items. These prices are of two kinds:

1. Community prices—issued by the district OPA office in your area and covering certain grocery and dairy products. *See the community pricing order for commodities covered.*

2. National dollar-and-cent prices—issued by the National OPA office. As of May 10, the regulation setting pork prices by zones all over the country is in effect. *See the poster on pork prices for your zone.*

You have been requested to help in making these prices effective in your area and to help retailers in following these regulations. Here are instructions and suggestions which you should follow in order to accomplish these objectives.

Suggestions on How to Make Your Visit Successful

I. Ask for the manager or owner of the store. Introduce yourself as a representative of the price panel of his War Price and Rationing Board. Tell him you have been assigned to help him in pricing his goods and posting his store in accordance with certain orders issued by the Office of Price Administration.

II. Plan your questioning so as to take as little of his time as is necessary to cover the information set forth in the assignment sheet.

III. If you discover that his prices are in excess of the prices established in the community pricing order, tell him that the prices in the order are the highest prices which may be charged by any retail store in the community. If his store is not in a class for which the flat community price was established as a ceiling price, his ceiling price will continue to be established under Regulations 238 and 268, copies of which may be obtained from the nearest district OPA office.

IV. You should check to see that the class of his store (OPA–1, 2, 3, or 4) is posted where consumers can readily see it. On or near the cash register is the suggested location. If his store is not posted, tell

him that the order requires him to determine his classification and to post that classification. If he does not know how to determine his class, tell him to consult his price panel or the district office.

V. The regulation setting dollar-and-cent prices for pork by zones requires the retailer to post the prices for his class of store. See that he had his poster displayed *prominently* in his meat department. If he does not have a poster, tell him it may be secured from his War Price and Rationing Board or the district office. Dollar-and-cent prices on other meats or commodities will be established in the near future. Be sure to check the posting provisions in subsequent orders.

VI. Be polite and courteous at all times. Do not try to answer questions on subjects not covered by your assignment. Refer the retailer to the price panel or to the district office. Do not argue with a retailer who refuses to listen or to cooperate; be sure to report such a situation to your Price Panel.

LIST OF TRAINING MATERIALS RELATING TO PRICE-CONTROL ACTIVITIES AT LOCAL BOARD LEVEL

National

1. *Handbook for War Price and Rationing Boards:*
   Prepared by the Training Branch, Personnel Division. Printed. 42 pages. January 1944.
2. *Handbook for Price Panel Assistants:*
   Prepared by the Training Branch, Personnel Division. Printed. 28 pages. January 1944.
3. *Guide for Training Field Price Representatives in the Price Panel Program:*
   Prepared by Price Panel Section and Training Branch, Office of Price Administration. Multilithed. 30 pages. September 1944.
4. *OPA Is Our Battle Line:*
   A Drama of Price Control, prepared by Price Panel Section and Training Branch, Office of Price Administration. Set of 50 charts, 17″ x 23″. September 1944.
5. *Price Panel Program:*
   Prepared by Price Panel Section and Training Branch as part of the "Job of the District Director," Office of Price Administration. Multilithed. 18 pages. June 1944.
6. *Retail Compliance Through Price Panels:*
   Prepared by Price Panel Section and Training Branch, Office of Price Administration. Multilithed. 12 pages. August 1944.
7. *Your Job As Price Panel Assistant:*
   Training slide-film for Price Panel Assistants, prepared by Department of Information, Office of Price Administration. 100 frames.
8. *Handbook for District Volunteer Specialists:*
   Prepared by National Volunteer Section, fall 1944.
9. *Handbook for Volunteer Assistance Supervisors:*
   Prepared by National Volunteer Section, fall 1944.
10. *"Volunteers":*
    Bimonthly publication addressed to "those who direct [volunteers'] activities." Prepared by Training Branch, Information Department, Operating Divisions, and Volunteer Section. First issue January 1945.

11. *Volunteer Aid Manual:*
    A handbook for district volunteer specialists, board supervisors, and volunteer specialists, covering recruitment methods. Prepared by National Volunteer Section and Price Board Management. January 1496.

Regional

1. *The Administrator's Claim:*
   A skit in three scenes for training of price panel members. Region 6, Office of Price Administration. Mimeographed. 12 pages. October 1944.
2. *Training the Price Panel Assistant:*
   Region 8, Office of Price Administration. Mimeographed. 10 pages. October 1944.
3. *Do's and Don'ts When Checking a Meat Market:*
   Region 6, Price Department, Office of Price Administration. Multilithed. 8 pages. No date.
4. *Know Your Meat, Beef:*
   Sound movie, one-reel. Region 6, Office of Price Administration. No date.
5. *Training Materials for Price Panel Assistants, Know Your Meat, Beef:*
   Region 8, Office of Price Administration. Multilithed. 14 pages. No date.

District

1. *What You Can Do to Make Price Control Work:*
   Prepared by Sherwood Dodge, District Price Executive. District Office of Price Administration, Washington, D. C. 5 pages.
2. *How You Can Tell Top Legal Prices—The Wartime Consumer's Bill of Rights:*
   Prepared by Sherwood Dodge, District Price Executive, District Office of Price Administration, Washington, D. C. 5 pages. September 1943.

VOLUNTEERS' POST EXCHANGE

The following is a list of names of some of the long-term OPA volunteers who have given thousands of hours of their time to War Price and Rationing Boards to help protect their communities from the ravages of inflation and to assure everybody a fair share of the Nation's supply of necessary things that were short during World War II.

REGION II

BALTIMORE, MD., DISTRICT:
- Mrs. Albert Bouic.
- Mr. Berry Clark.
- Mr. Albert Eklund.

BINGHAMTON, N. Y., DISTRICT:
- Mr. Charles F. Bagley.
- Miss L. Grandin Baldwin.
- Mrs. Mark T. Mann.
- Mrs. Grover W. Phelps.
- Miss Helen N. Chapman.
- Mrs. Norman Beringer.

NEW YORK, N. Y., DISTRICT:
- Sgt. M. Kadushin.
- Mrs. Henrietta B. Frederick.
- Mrs. William Propos.
- Mrs. Elizabeth Schoenberg.
- Mrs. Harriet F. Nagele.
- Mr. Hubert Clark.
- Mr. Otis Skeele.
- Sister Garadus, St. Josephs College for Women.
- Mrs. James A. Garfield.

PITTSBURGH, PA., DISTRICT:
- Mrs. Harvey Martin.
- Mrs. Mary Jane Brady.
- Mrs. Edward Mason.
- Mrs. R. S. Wortley.
- Mrs. Harvy Potts.
- Mrs. Cora Ferguson.
- Miss Sarah Messmore.
- Mrs. Leroy Johnson.

SCRANTON, PA., DISTRICT:
- Mr. Roy Haring.
- Mr. Marvin Bloss.
- Mr. Ralph Harter.

SYRACUSE, N. Y., DISTRICT:
- Mr. Harry Shoomaker.
- Mrs. Charles Rodman (Edith).
- Mr. Samuel Hopkins Adams.

WASHINGTON, D. C., DISTRICT:
- Mrs. Ida Smith Walters.

REGION III

SAGINAW, MICH., DISTRICT:
- Mrs. Mabel McLean.
- Miss Sophia M. Marshall.
- Miss Bernice Fischer.
- Mrs. Verna Groat.
- Mrs. Mary Scheurmann.
- Mrs. Lillian Johnston.
- Mrs. Jennie Baker.
- Mrs. Georgiana Knapp.
- Mrs. Ruth Smiley.
- Miss Rommelda Bammel.
- Mrs. Regina Levy.
- Mrs. Isabelle Goodeyne.
- Mrs. Celia Harris.

LOUISVILLE, KY., DISTRICT:
- Mrs. Mabel Abney.
- Mrs. Freda Murion.

CLEVELAND, OHIO, DISTRICT:
- Mrs. Darwin S. Lumtz.

DETROIT, MICH., DISTRICT:
- Mrs. John Sawyer.
- Mr. John Fleming.

ESCANABA, MICH., DISTRICT:
- Mr. Stuart B. Miller.

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH., DISTRICT:
- Mrs. Harry Perrigo.
- Mrs. Amy Smith.

INDIANAPOLIS, IND., DISTRICT:
- Mrs. Florence Redman.
- Mrs. Lissetta Norris.
- Mrs. Cecile Hailman.
- Mrs. Bessie Baylor.
- Mrs. Elsie Cox.
- Mrs. John Halladay.
- Mrs. Chloe Bartling.
- Mrs. Edith Wright.
- Mrs. Iona Bonser.
- Mrs. Gertrude Solomon.

INDIANAPOLIS, IND., DISTRICT—Con.
Mrs. Louise Richardson.
Mrs. Mary Groble.
Mrs. Clara Bramming.
Mr. Willis Spitzer.
Mr. R. N. Eastman (deceased).

INDIANAPOLIS, IND., DISTRICT—Con.
Mrs. Marie Simms.
Mrs. Herbert King.
Mr. Theodore F. Fontaine.
Mrs. Ann Diffenderfer.
Mrs. Allegra Meeks.

REGION IV

BIRMINGHAM, ALA., DISTRICT:
Mrs. B. L. Rich.
Mrs. Henry Neal.
Mrs. Katherine Webb.
Mrs. John Todd.
Mrs. J. E. Clem.
Mrs. Thomas Woodroof.
Mrs. F. G. Poer.
Miss Mamie Kinney.
Mrs. R. P. Corder.
Mrs. F. A. Todd.
Mrs. Hoyt Wilson.

COLUMBIA, S. C., DISTRICT:
Mrs. Susan S. Bennett.

JACKSONVILLE, FLA., DISTRICT:
Mr. R. Blaine Dawson.
Miss Madge P. Middleton.
Mr. R. L. Reynolds.
Mr. L. H. Hill.

RALEIGH, N. C., DISTRICT:
Miss Rowena Borden.

ROANOKE, VA., DISTRICT:
Mr. Hamilton V. R. Fairfax.
Mrs. Bryan Agee.
Miss Annie Surgent.
Mrs. D. W. Mason.

REGION V

FORT WORTH, TEX., DISTRICT:
Mr. E. D. Lee.

DALLAS, TEX., DISTRICT:
Mrs. G. B. Strong.
Mrs. E. E. Hollerman.
Mrs. L. E. Casey.

ST. LOUIS, MO., DISTRICT:
Mrs. Charles Manassa.

TULSA, OKLA., DISTRICT:
Mr. John Nofire

REGION VI

CHICAGO, ILL., DISTRICT:
Miss Delina Walker.
Mr. Fred Schwers.
Miss Elizabeth Hurt.
Mr. Philip Flohr.
Mr. William Scott.
Mr. James E. Elliott.
Mrs. A. Herr.
Miss Doris Frey.
Mrs. Kate Bojarski.
Mrs. Roy Stanger.

DES MOINES, IOWA, DISTRICT:
Mr. Payson Snow.

GREEN BAY, WIS., DISTRICT:
Mrs. A. W. Raue.

MILWAUKEE, WIS., DISTRICT:
Mr. Herman F. Schroeder.

NORTH PLATTE, NEBR., DISTRICT:
Mr. A. W. Hawkins.

PEORIA, ILL., DISTRICT:
Mrs. Hazel Lane.

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., DISTRICT:
Mr. Frank Carter.

REGION VII

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO.:
Miss Helen Jackson.

DENVER, COLO., DISTRICT:
Mrs. Ruth Cornell.
Mr. William Duckworth.

REGION VIII

FRESNO, CALIF., DISTRICT:
Mrs. Althouse.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF., DISTRICT:
Mr. Fred Wider.

SAN DIEGO, CALIF., DISTRICT:
Mrs. Nancy H. W. Sperry.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF., DISTRICT:
Miss Betty Lavagnino.
Miss Florence Rose.
Miss Rebecca S. Morrison.

Volunteer report.—May 31, 1945, continental United States and Territories

Region	Paid employees	Number boards	Number VAS's
I. Boston	3,036	737	85
II. New York	6,838	630	420
III. Cleveland	5,163	645	375
IV. Atlanta	5,543	892	279
V. Dallas	5,068	757	243
VI. Chicago	4,997	845	317
VII. Denver	1,262	334	140
VIII. San Francisco	3,321	597	280
IX. Territories	228	119	7
Total	35,456	5,556	2,146

Region	Regular clerical volunteers		Price panel assistants		Peak load volunteers		Community service		Total	
	Number	Hours	Number	Hours	Number	Hours	Number	Hours	Number	Hours
I. Boston	1,682	26,574	1,499	12,824	1,146	5,742	305	2,348	4,632	47,488
II. New York	5,451	82,729	6,529	34,054	5,081	32,038	358	2,488	17,419	151,309
III. Cleveland	3,206	46,088	7,278	33,239	5,657	48,811	235	1,504	16,376	129,642
IV. Atlanta	2,260	28,885	4,199	17,892	6,406	42,447	885	4,293	13,750	93,517
V. Dallas	4,270	60,752	7,889	30,251	4,214	34,113	515	2,453	16,888	127,569
VI. Chicago	6,323	97,885	6,162	32,773	6,056	43,886	883	4,207	19,424	178,751
VII. Denver	1,120	14,759	2,142	8,522	1,318	9,654	3,261	5,023	7,841	37,958
VIII. San Francisco	7,578	191,696	2,162	21,247	1,803	21,453	340	2,647	11,883	237,043
IX. Territories	596	8,420	426	3,385	227	1,573	192	937	1,441	14,315
Total	32,486	557,788	38,286	194,187	31,908	239,717	6,974	25,900	109,654	1,017,592

District office monthly statistical report on local board operations, continental United States and Territories, July 23, 1945

A. COMPOSITION AND ANALYSIS OF BOARD MEMBERSHIP

	Number of boards	Number of members
Clergymen	1,600	2,269
Consumers	4,131	24,139
Doctors	1,147	1,644
Educators, (teachers, etc.)	3,335	7,556
Farmers	3,612	11,061
Labor (organized)	2,356	5,951
Labor (unorganized)	1,059	2,392
Lawyers	2,267	3,892
Merchants	4,577	23,648
Negro members	197	755
Others	4,590	43,768
Total number of boards		5,554
Total number of board members		127,075
Estimated number of hours spent by all board members		1,510,608

B. BOARD ORGANIZATION

	Total
Price:	
Total number of price panels	8,256
Total number of panel members	36,252
Total number of full-time price clerks	6,166
Number of panels with full-time price clerks	3,928
Number of panels with part-time price clerks	4,223
Number of panels with assistants	6,808
Rationing:	
Total number of ration panels	19,498
Total number of ration panel members	[1] 75,000
Total number of full-time ration clerks	22,077
Administrative:	
Total number of community service panels	3,612
Total number of community service members	14,913
Total number of boards with executive committees	2,345
Total number of volunteer assistance supervisors	2,279

[1] Estimated.

District office monthly statistical report on local board operations, continental United States and Territories, July 23, 1945—Continued

C. VOLUNTEERS

	Total number	Total hours worked
Regular volunteers, clerical and distribution officers	33,272	591,067
Price panel assistants	37,480	189,567
Peak-load volunteers (extras)	29,548	263,637
Community service volunteers	7,506	23,541
Total number of volunteers	107,806	1,067,812

Reduction in volunteer services, percentage by regions, at Mar. 31, 1946, as compared to peak month

Region	Peak spring 1945	March 1946	Percentage drop
			Percent
VIII	13,665	1,017	93
IV	16,870	1,639	90
II	17,419	2,578	85
VII	7,841	1,453	81
III	16,660	3,790	77
VI	20,230	4,901	76
V	17,464	4,656	73
I	7,054	2,536	64
National	109,489	22,570	79

Reduction in volunteer services—board members, price panel members, information panel members

	Board members	Price panel members	Information panel members
1945			
March	112,291	34,652	11,291
April	117,810	35,654	12,327
May	122,731	34,879	13,438
June	124,301	34,919	14,254
July	125,487	35,152	14,496
August	123,918	36,004	14,913
September	111,060	36,673	14,243
October	91,606	32,051	12,206
November	74,131	28,982	11,428
December	63,723	27,754	10,074
1946			
January	48,366	31,421	10,135
February	43,817	29,329	10,421
March	43,093	28,198	10,012
Drop—From peak month to March 1946—percent	66	13	33

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